

Y

LETTERS ON ENGLAND.

BY

LOUIS BLANC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY JAMES HUTTON
AND REVISED BY THE AUTHOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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It should be observed, that the quotations from English may have undergone some trifling alterations here and there, so far as mere words are concerned, owing to the fact that the Translator had not before him the original passages, which, after being translated into French by the Author, had to be translated again into English by the Translator.

It may be added, that this translation has been carefully revised by M. Louis Blanc, and accepted as the faithful interpretation of the ideas expressed by himself in a different tongue.

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LETTERS ON ENGLAND.

LETTER I.

THE UNITY OF ITALY DESIRED BY ENGLAND.

April 29th, 1861.

A STRIKING and glorious privilege is that which is the peculiar attribute of France! Her existence is a phenomenon from which the nations of the earth in vain strive to turn aside their gaze. They love to speak her language. It is at the thousand beacons of her literature that they kindle their own lights. So far as it is in their power they blend their history with hers. They re-echo her cries; they seek an answer from her vaguest aspirations; and if, perchance, in her hours of slumber, she happen to dream aloud, they make it their care to find an interpretation for those dreams. Does she take a step in advance, they, too, step forward; does she hesitate, they come to a dead halt.

In truth, it is a glorious privilege; but it is one to the enjoyment of which are attached responsibilities of a serious nature. It is precisely because France exercises an immense power of fascination, that she is bound to summon to her aid every source of intelligence calculated to guide her aright in the use of this sovereign faculty. It is the duty of those in whom the whole world is interested, to take some little interest in that same world. Whoso hath much power, should also have much knowledge. Is that truism sufficiently recognised in France? I fear it is not. It seems to me that, in our country, we do not attend as much as we ought to do, to what is passing elsewhere. It seems to me that we are too apt to live upon our own ideas, and that we are too much absorbed in the pre-occupation of our own affairs to remember that the

tie, the strong tie, which connects them with those of the whole world, ought to render that pre-occupation somewhat less exclusive. The celebrated Abbé Galjani pleasantly remarked: "What distinguishes man from the other animals is, that he is the only animal that meddles with what does not concern him." But is there anything which concerns the world, that does not also concern France?

England takes note, day by day—I had almost said, hour by hour—of our acts and projects. Do we do as much with respect to England? The difference is flattering for us, I admit, but more flattering than profitable. Certain it is, that people here are not a little surprised at the very slight attention which the French press in general accords to the affairs of other countries. The omission is only too manifest, and is in every way to be regretted. If, in establishing a new journal, it is part of your programme to fill this void, I sincerely wish you every success; and if you think I can be of any service to you, I place myself entirely at your disposal.

So much for preface—let us now to work.

You are aware of the impassioned interest which England, considered as a whole, has taken in the Italian movements. It must not be supposed, however, that this sympathy is altogether without a counterpoise. What French bishop, for instance, could carry his solicitude for the Pope further than did Lord Derby, when he declared, in the House of Lords, that it was the duty of the French Government, and touched its honour, to prolong for an indefinite period the occupation of Rome by French troops? Is it not strange to hear the leader of a great party, a man who was prime minister yesterday, and may be so again to-morrow, lay down as an axiom that Protestant England is interested in the independence of the Pope? What has now become of the cry the Tories used to utter so fiercely previous to the Catholic emancipation—"No Popery!" Can it be that the conservative party of this country prefer any risk to that of assisting the progress of the human mind, and fear that in permitting the throne of St. Peter to crumble away, they will be making a covenant with those who sacrifice to "the unknown God"—Revolution?

This explanation is so far plausible, but another may be found of which France will do well not to lose sight. If the

party of which Lord Derby is the leader, is opposed to the unity of Italy, it is because the unity of Italy implies the weakening of Austria, and in their eyes whatever weakens Austria or imperils its existence, would have the effect of proportionately increasing the power of France.

Ultramontanism defended by Protestants, and Catholic Austria supported by a party so long hostile to Catholic Ireland,—such are the strange phenomena which the narrow selfishness, the wilful blindness of national jealousies, are alone capable of producing. But what is still more striking than Lord Derby's speech in the House of Lords, is one delivered by Mr. Roebuck to the electors of Sheffield. This time it is no longer a Conservative who speaks, but a Radical, and a Radical for many a year past noted for his rude probity, his austere frankness of tongue, his boorish independence; but who, having lately visited Austria, whence he has brought back ideas more acceptable at Vienna than at Turin, has been called upon to give some explanation to his assembled constituents of opinions deemed scandalous on the part of such a man.

He was suspected, even accused, of being moved by personal interest in upholding Austria at the expense of Venice. In what manner did he seek to justify himself? Here are his own words: "To the north-west of Italy there is a great power called France, and to the north-east a great power called Austria. Now, it is as an Englishman I examine this question. There are people who make war for an idea, and that in taking Nice and Savoy. Ever since Charles VIII. France has had her eye upon Italy. Well, what I want, is a check to the ambition of France."

At the same time I must not omit to state that Mr. Roebuck is one of those men who love to walk by themselves, and to whom the idea of a compact with any party whatever is a subject of horror. He entertains solitary convictions, for which he alone must be held responsible. It would be supremely unfair to judge, by his words or acts in any given circumstance, of the nature of the sentiments which animate the English Liberals. In truth, so far as Italy is concerned, there can be no doubt as to the sincerity of their sympathies. But even here a line must be drawn. There are those who desire the Italian unity from a simple and generous love of

justice, but there are also those who pray for it with all their hearts for the very same motive that impels Lord Derby to thrust it aside, and causes Mr. Roebuck to regard it with apprehension.

Yes, it is a singular fact, but one easily understood, that while some demand that Austria be not too much weakened lest France should be too much strengthened, the others desire the aggrandisement of Italy, because they see in the creation of a new kingdom, with twenty-five millions of inhabitants, a breach made in the influence of France upon the Continent,—because the existence of a constitutional Italy inspires them with a degree of confidence against the encroachments of France under an empire, and against the propagandism of France under a democracy,—because they regard the creation of a great Italian kingdom as a far more effective barrier than the insignificant kingdom of Piedmont, which the treaties of Vienna erected against France,—finally, because the idea of turning the Mediterranean into a French lake has never ceased to excite visions of terror.

I repeat, however, that it is far from being the case that such selfish considerations are at the bottom of all the testimonies of sympathy which the independence of Italy has called forth from this side of the Channel. From my own personal knowledge, I can say that, both in England and in Scotland, there are men who have acted with a purity of motives and a degree of self-abnegation worthy of admiration, giving their money with a liberal hand, undertaking long and expensive journeys,—in short, helping the cause of Right with no other motive than a desire to contribute to its triumph.

LETTER II.

May 6th, 1861.

WHEN the chronicler of the day is called upon to choose between subjects that are floating, as it were, upon the surface of history, and those which are hidden in its depths, his choice is soon made. The attention of careless observers and of the whole tribe of idlers, is more readily attracted by the accidents of the outer life of a nation than by the twistings and turnings of its inner life. A ministry that goes out—a ministry that comes in—a parliamentary tournament—a Court cabal—a drawing-room scandal, these are the subjects that satisfy the curiosity of those who regard history as a mere stage comedy. And yet how many questions are there calculated not only to interest the intellect, but to touch the heart, in those regions of thought which the chronicle of the day too frequently disdains to notice! Now and then there is a book, even among those which fall still-born or at first overlooked into the great current of human events and roll along for a time beneath the flood, that bears in itself the destinies of many millions of men, and contains one of those dramas in which the actors are nations.

• About a year ago, I think, a book appeared in England which, in its early days, was scarcely at all remarked. It was the republication, in a single volume, of seven essays by seven different authors, on various aspects of the Bible, which have long since furnished food for controversy. There was nothing in the matter or in the manner of this book that seemed likely to cause any excitement among the public at large; and as for men of learning, it contained nothing sufficiently original to make a sensation among them.

Nevertheless, it so happens that just now this book is creating an agitation in England which goes on increasing, and threatens to disturb many consciences. Attacked by a small group of free-thinkers as guilty of reticence indicative of want of moral courage, and as deficient in candour; com-

mented upon with rage and terror by the whole body of defenders of received traditions; denounced from the Protestant pulpit as a sacrilegious attack upon the inviolability of the popular faith; formally condemned by the bench of bishops; anathematized by a protest to which ten thousand clergymen have affixed their signatures, it enjoys all the honours of an excommunication in due form; and, witness its nine successive editions, it advances, advances, advances in the midst of clamour. The breath of episcopal wrath blowing upon a torch, has suddenly kindled a conflagration.

There is here an historical phenomenon that is well worthy of attention. In the first place, it is especially necessary to explain the nature of the medium in which this phenomenon has presented itself. There exists in England an Association entitled "The British and Foreign Bible Society," which has issued from its presses upwards of thirty-nine million copies of the Bible; to which must be added about five millions of pious tracts, published by the Association entitled "The Religious Tract Society."

Montaigne says, in speaking of the Scriptures, "Ce n'est pas raison qu'on permette qu'un garçon de boutique, parmy ses vains et frivoles pensements, s'en entretienne et s'en joue; ny n'est certes raison de voir tracasser par une salle et par une cuisine le saint Livre des sacrés mystères de notre créance." [It is not reasonable to permit a shopboy, with his vain and frivolous mode of thought, to occupy and amuse himself with them: neither is it agreeable to reason to see bustled about, through kitchen and hall, the sacred Book of the holy mysteries of our belief.] And again: "Ce n'est pas l'étude de tout le monde. Plaisantes gens, qui pensent l'avoir rendue maniable au peuple, pour l'avoir mise en langage populaire!" [They are not a study for everybody. Pleasant fellows those, who fancy that they have rendered them accessible to the common people, by rendering them into the vernacular tongue.]

But it is not after this fashion that the matter is viewed in this country. The Bible is here distributed gratuitously among the people,—it is placed in the traveller's path,—it is slipped, as it were, into the hand of the passer-by,—it is found in hotels, on the bed-room mantel-piece,—it lies about on the table in taverns; and if good old Montaigne were

alive at the present day, and were to visit England, he would wake up one fine morning with the Bible in his pocket.

Now, what manner of book is this to which I have alluded? It is a critical examination of the Bible from the rationalistic point of view.

In the first of the seven Essays in which this examination is conducted, the human race is represented as a colossal man, whose mind has been formed by the logical development of the creeds and doctrines of successive ages. Pascal long ago remarked: "L'humanité est un homme qui vit toujours et qui apprend sans cesse." [Mankind is a man who lives for ever, and is for ever learning.] But what would become, according to this theory, of the authority of a book which marks in this respect a full stop in the progress of human knowledge, and which supposes mankind to be in possession of the entire truth, while there yet remains a long space for human life?

The second Essay is a review of the writings of Baron Bunsen. In it you may read that the account of the origin of our race which appears in Genesis, is partly traditional, partly imaginary; that the longevity of the patriarchs must be banished to the domain of legends or symbols; that the famous prophecy of Isaiah, "He was despised and rejected of men," does not apply to the Messiah; that the book of Daniel was written in the reign of Antiochus by a patriotic bard; that justification by faith simply means peace of mind; that by regeneration must be understood the awakening of the powers of the human mind; that salvation signifies the victory won over evil and error; that Hell is the image of remorse, and Heaven the fulfilment of the love of God. It is true that all this was extracted from the writings of Bunsen, of whom the author of the second Essay is only an interpreter; but, as it is wittily observed in an article inserted, in October, 1860, in the *Westminster Review*, "Toucer discharged his arrows from behind the shield of Ajax."

Is it possible for reason and philosophy to admit, as regards the material world, the existence of phenomena in flagrant contradiction to the laws of matter, and in opposition to the oneness of physical causes? No. Therefore, away with miracles. Such is the tenour of the third Essay.

In the fourth, the scalpel which was so vigorously applied

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by Niebuhr to Roman history, is directed against many a passage in the history of the Hebrews. What are we to think of the capture of Jerusalem by Shishack? The same that we think of the sack of Rome by the Gauls? Was there ever a serpent tempter? Was there ever an ass speaking with a man's voice? On these points you are free to take things literally, or to see nothing in those marvels but allegories, parables, or legends.

What more need be said? In the fifth Essay the whole Mosaic cosmogony is overthrown; and in the seventh—the sixth being comparatively harmless—we are advised to interpret the Bible as we would any other book.

What avails it, after all this, that the different writers assure us, in a preface which betrays their uneasiness, that they do not pretend to put their thoughts together as common property, and that each insists upon being held answerable only for his own contribution? The bond that binds the seven Essays to one another is manifest, and the singleness of the impression that results from reading them altogether is indisputable. It is as if workmen were to exclaim, when drawn up side by side to pull down a wall, "Mind yourselves! Each of us is answerable only for the fall of the stones that give way beneath his own blows."

And it is worthy of note that the writers in question are by no means the forlorn hope of the scattered army of doubters. They are professors of high reputation, distinguished theologians, churchmen. They embrace Dr. Temple, who occupies one of the most exalted posts in the educational department, and who may one day be consecrated a bishop; Dr. Williams, Vice-Principal of a College devoted to the instruction of candidates for holy orders; Mr. Powell, the late learned Professor of Astronomy, whose death has left a blank that will not easily be filled up; Mr. Goodwin, a member of the laity, more profoundly versed than most professional theologians in the knowledge of Biblical subjects; Mr. Wilson, Mr. Pattison, and the eminent Greek Professor, Mr. Jowett, all three regarded as the lights of Oxford.

Among the Gentiles it was forbidden even to the wisest of men; even to Plato and Socrates, to inquire into, or to speak about, the things confided to the priests of Delphi. Here it is the priests of Delphi themselves who speak to the multitude

about the things that have been confided to them, and who speak in the language of free-thinkers.

It is in vain that, in an article recently published in the *Edinburgh Review* with a view to calm the agitation, and cover the orthodoxy of the book that has created it, we are assured that it contains nothing which has not already been said by theologians such as Herder, Schleiermacher, Lucke, Neander, De Wette, Ewald, and even by some Anglican bishops. In what respect does that tend to destroy the bearing of what the Bench of Bishops of the present day thrust aside as fraught with great peril? If we are to believe the same critic, and also the writers whose champion he evidently is, notwithstanding his reserve, so far from wishing to make a breach in the orthodox edifice, the object they had in view was to consolidate it, in disarming science by a skilful adoption of its weapons of attack, in consenting to recognise what can no longer be denied, and in placing the Bible, once for all, beyond the reach of risk and accident by the following train of reasoning:—

It is quite true that the Mosaic cosmogony cannot serve as the foundation for instruction in astronomy and geology—but what of that? The object of the Scriptures is to teach mankind, not astronomy and geology, but moral and religious truths. It is quite true that the Bible is full of imperfections, errors, nay, contradictions, and that obscurity in it borders very closely upon revelation—but what matter, provided the Divine origin of the message is still visible through the human weakness of the messenger?

Unless I am greatly mistaken, that is a rather dangerous mode of supporting orthodoxy. Like the eloquent and vigorous writer in the *Westminster Review*, I believe that moral truth, to constitute a religion, must rest upon a uniform body of doctrine, and that the reverence accorded to Holy Writ is in great danger of degenerating into a profane admiration, if the theory of salvation be susceptible of a new interpretation; if all that touches upon rewards and punishments, the fall of man, and original sin, has only a figurative signification; if it be permitted to withhold a literal meaning from miracles, prophecies, and inspiration; if the Mosaic narrative be nothing more than a compilation of legends; if the Mosaic origin of the earth and of mankind be allowed to

fall into the domain of rabbinical cosmogonies; if Mount Sinai and the Cave of Egeria, if Moses and Numa, appear to us enveloped in the same obscurity, through the mist of ages.

If now you ask me what historical signification I attach to the publication of the *Essays and Reviews*, my opinion is, that such an incident marks the hour of the complete and definite triumph in England of the grand principle of the Freedom of Inquiry. What is very remarkable is this, that the attack directed by the *Westminster Review* against the authors of the *Essays and Reviews*, may be summed up in this formula: "What we want, is more than the power to enfranchise the world, it is the power to face one's own conclusions. To say what one thinks is good: to believe what one thinks is still better. There is something more needful at the present day than courage to act—it is, courage to think." And the defence put forth by the *Edinburgh Review* tends to demand, in favour even of the clergy themselves, full licence to utter frankly, freely, and without any risk of losing their livings, whatever they have on their heart or in their mind! So that, in fact, one and the same cry is raised at the same time from the two opposite camps: Freedom of Inquiry.

What! is not freedom of inquiry the very essence of Protestantism? Yes, undoubtedly—in principle; but how often has practice deviated from that principle! Luther himself gave the signal for this strange deviation when he roused the princes against Munzer, and persecuted Carlstadt. His example has been only too closely followed, and Protestant intolerance is one of the scandals of history. But when a true principle germinates at the bottom of a doctrine, the moment will surely come, sooner or later, when it will pierce through in spite of everything; for the logic of events makes sport of the passions and follies of mankind.

LETTER III.

THE SYRIAN QUESTION.

May 12th, 1861.

THE political prejudices of England have been keenly marked by the recent debates that have taken place in both Houses, and, curiously enough, on the same day, concerning the state of affairs in Syria.

These debates were brief, but characteristic.

What definite solution is to be given to the problem which the massacre of the Christians at Damascus has just proposed in human blood? Is the Turkish Government capable, if left to itself, of preventing the renewal of such horrors? And if its incapacity be admitted, by what diplomatic process, by what administrative combination, by what intervention of Christian peoples, is this incapacity to be supplemented, without inflicting the fatal blow on a moribund whose existence is regarded by statesmen as essential to the maintenance of the political equilibrium? Upon all these points opinions differ very widely.

Some desire that Syria, like Egypt, should become a Vice-royalty.

Some demand that the Druses be placed under the government of a Druse, the Maronites under that of a Maronite, and the Greeks under that of a Greek.

There are those, again, who wish to see Syria confided to the administration of a native; a scheme rejected by others through fear of the traditional hatreds and local jealousies which may be expected to brood in the heart of a man belonging to the country.

Finally, there are those who, like Mr. Layard, insist upon relieving the Turks of the manifold tutelage under which they are bound down. They contend that Turkey would be sufficient unto herself, had she not unhappily so many saviours, each of whom burns to save her after his own fashion. They extol her tolerance, which they contrast with the barbarous policy of Russia in banishing from the Crimea the entire race of Tartars. They denounce the injustice of rendering Turkey answerable for the ill-success of plans imposed

upon her. They represent her as dying in consequence of the very efforts of her numerous doctors to preserve her life.

I doubt if the confusion of tongues could have been greater even in the Tower of Babel.

But in the midst of this extreme diversity of opinions there is one point on which all are agreed, and that is, the urgency of putting an end to the occupation of Syria by the French.

In that, as regards the English in general, lies the gist of the question—I might say the whole question. Many of them—as is proved by the speech of Sir James Fergusson in last Friday's sitting—are well aware that the evacuation of Syria by the French may produce terrible results. They do not attempt to deceive themselves as to the deplorable condition of a country inhabited by ten distinct races, and exposed to the fury of seventeen fanatical sects. They place but little faith in the effective power of the Turkish Government, notwithstanding Mr. Layard's assertions, whose optimism may perhaps be partly explained by the fact that he is the Chairman of the Ottoman Bank. They know that if, in consequence of the premature withdrawal of the French, three thousand Christians in 1861 were to follow to the tomb the three thousand Christians whose massacre was witnessed by the year 1860, England, who brought about this retreat, would stand in danger of having to answer to posterity for the second massacre . . . No matter. The progress of French influence! What misfortune is to be compared with that!

It was worth while to watch, indeed, the subdued passion with which Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, on Friday last, rose from his seat, and invited the House of Lords to declare in formal terms, "that it would see with profound regret any circumstance conduced to a continuation, however brief, of the occupation of Syria by foreign troops beyond the 5th of June following, the period fixed for their withdrawal."

It is also worthy of remark, that if this motion was withdrawn by its proposer, "though with regret," it was owing to the very characteristic reply of Lord Wodehouse, that the Government had no reason to entertain any doubts as to the withdrawal of the French at the period agreed upon, and that it was not right to seem to have any such doubts.

In the speech delivered by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe in support of his proposition, there is a passage not only solemn, but full of menace, which appears to me of sufficient importance to be brought under your special notice. It is this :—"The movements which have taken place on the Continent add every day to the dangers of the Porte, and to temptations of a nature to excite covetous desires that would place England in the necessity of stepping forward at every risk." From the lips of a man who has so long and so ably represented the policy of England at Constantinople, such words have a significance upon which I need not further insist.

Really, there is nothing more curious than the light tone affected by the *Times* on this occasion. According to the journal by whose voice England is supposed to speak when she addresses herself to Europe, the English, after all, have nothing to do with the part France may, or may not, play in Syria. If it pleases her to break a sacred engagement, if she is so ill-advised by her vanity and ambition as to persist in an enterprise as fatal to her interests as to her honour, that is her business. She is free to pursue a system of aggression and a policy of adventure which must undermine her strength, ruin her finances, and dry up the sources of her population. The English people must really be very good-natured to feel more interest in France than she feels for herself! It is possible that she may have been insincere in the late negotiations, that her presence in Syria may have complicated the problem instead of solving it, that she may have so manœuvred as to be no longer able to withdraw without leaving behind her a civil war—but, if such be the case, let her gather at her leisure the fruits of her crime—(the word actually occurs in the article). Why should England trouble herself about the matter? Supposing France were in possession of Syria, would that make her master of Egypt, which would always be protected against the cavalry, artillery, and baggage-waggons of an invading army by the impassable barrier of the desert? Let England, then, sleep in peace, and leave France to make of Syria, if such be her dream, what she has made of Algeria; that is to say, a military colony, in which industry and commerce give place to theatres and cafés!

Some persons, perhaps, may be tempted to see in this language nothing more than a spiteful feeling concealed

beneath an assumption of disdain. To my thinking, however, it possesses a far deeper significance, which is explained by the part the *Times* is called upon to play in the realms of publicity.

The *Times* is not like other journals. Its large circulation, its enormous influence, the essentially political character of the classes to which it addresses itself, the credit it possesses with foreign Governments, the reputation it, rightly or wrongly, enjoys of being the mouthpiece of England, all this conspires to give it a *diplomatic* importance. Sometimes it has an article which, by reason of the effect it will produce abroad, needs to be written with as much care, with as much guarded thoughtfulness, as a State paper. Now, if there is one thing the *Times* fears more than another, it is a rupture between England and France; and as it apprehends that the germ of a rupture lies in this Syrian question, it is preparing its readers beforehand to hear it exclaim: "France remains in Syria. Well, be it so! The dignity of England is in no way compromised, and it would be really very foolish of us, for such a trifle, to set the world in a blaze."

I need not go further with this review of surrounding circumstances, upon which I entered, not with any feeling of bitterness, but with a feeling of sorrow. For it is impossible to be a lover of progress, and behold without emotion France and England perpetuating that miserable spirit of rivalry, distrust, and envy, which tends so strongly to shackle their respective influence on the destinies of mankind. When will these two great nations come to understand that they were made, not to be the enemies, but the complement, of one another? That restlessness of spirit, sometimes rash but always generous, which impels France to seek unexpected solutions, to set forth on the discovery of new horizons, to push forward civilization, finds its necessary counterpoise in the reverence for traditions, in the patient and reflective temperament, in the fear of sudden changes, which characterize the English people. No doubt, never did two nations less resemble one another, either in their good qualities or in their defects. But this is only an additional reason why their close alliance should be fruitful of good, and therefore desirable. And yet how can this be possible, so long as those are the first to kindle the fires of national

jealousies, whose mission it is to enlighten and guide the peoples of the earth? What, for instance, is more pitiable than the attitude of resistance which, only this very week, Lord Palmerston's Cabinet has assumed in reference to the question of the Isthmus of Suez! As if the interest of universal civilization ceased to be of any consideration as soon as the interests of France became associated with it! Alas! so long as the direction of human affairs is understood in this fashion, the world runs a great risk of continuing in its infancy!

LETTER IV.

THE IONIAN ISLANDS.

May 12th, 1861,

A few words now on the question of the Ionian Islands.

"What is sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander also," John Bull rightly observes. Mr. Maguire's speech on the subject of the Ionian islands was the development of that popular proverb. Mr. Maguire not unreasonably demanded of Ministers why they did not practise what they preached; why that which they recognised as true when it referred to Italy, should cease to be so when applied to the Ionian Islands; why the inhabitants of those islands should not be allowed to invoke against the protectorate of England the maxim invoked by Italy against the domination of Austria, and formally admitted by Lord John Russell, to wit: that every people has a right to choose its own rulers?

As you remarked in one of your recent numbers, it is ridiculous on the part of the English Ministers to represent themselves as determined to make the Ionians happy in spite of themselves. What good is there in dissembling the fact, that the executive power in England is essentially oligarchical; that it cannot do without means of patronage; that it is surrounded by numerous appetites to satisfy; that that alone would suffice to render precious in its eyes the maintenance of all that means protection and dependence; that it is convenient to have proconsulships to give away; and—taking a higher view of the question—that Great Britain finds this

advantage in the possession of the Ionian Islands, that it places in her hands the key of the Adriatic? If the English Government confined themselves to the assertion—the proof of which is another matter—that the Ionians have no desire to unite themselves with Greece, that all that has been said to that effect is false, and that they are perfectly satisfied with their present condition—well and good. But that one of the ministerial organs should venture to throw into the discussion the maxim so dear to tyrants,—that no people is worthy of liberty until it has power to achieve it—this, indeed, may fill us with wonder. What! weakness is then a crime! The justification of oppression may be derived from the very weight of the chains it has forged! Italy herself, then, was not worthy to be free, since she had need of French succour! Let us cease to mourn for the martyrs of Warsaw—they were not strong enough to deliver their country!

LETTER V.

TEA AND THE PENNY PAPERS.

May 14th, 1861.

WHO was it had the impertinence to say, in speaking of English women, “There is something they love better than either you or me—that is, themselves; something they love better than themselves—that is, their reputation; something they love better than their reputation—that is, their tea?” I protest against this ill-bred calumny, in the name of our well-known *galanterie française*. All I can grant is, that Englishwomen do love their tea, but certainly not more than Englishmen. One day at Brighton I was seated on a bench by the sea-side, when, at six o’clock, a man came to take it away, uttering these sacramental words, “It is my tea-time.” The hour for prayer is scarcely more imperious. Would you know what is the bond of union between the highest and the lowest person in these realms? It is the passion for tea. In this classic land of inequality, tea is the only thing, with the exception, perhaps, of death, that tends slightly to equalise the different orders of society. What an

advance has civilization made in England since 1664—since that epoch of barbarism—commercial barbarism I mean, of course—when two pounds of tea, which now cost eight shillings, were considered as a present worthy to be offered to a king! We read in old accounts of undoubted authenticity: “£4 5s. for two pounds two ounces of tea presented to his Majesty.”

I have lying before me figures which will give you an idea of the progress that has been made in this country in the consumption of tea. In 1841, it amounted in Great Britain to 31,788,332 lb., yielding a revenue of £3,439,108; while in 1851, it had attained the total of 47,375,781 lb., yielding a revenue of £5,181,651. In 1841, the average consumption of tea per head was 1.71 lb.; in 1851, it was 2.27, and at the present day it is very nearly 3 lb.

To such of your readers as are aware that statistics are the key of history, I commend the following curious comparison. Two centuries ago the total revenue of England was under four millions sterling, while at the present time a single tax—the duty upon tea—pours into the Treasury £4,739,319.

See to what an extent tea has conquered England, and to what an extent the public exchequer has benefited by the conquest! It has benefited too much, say the common people, in whose eyes the low price of tea is naturally the touchstone of British institutions and the standard of merit by which to measure each Chancellor of the Exchequer.

And yet the question of deciding upon which of the two great articles of common consumption, tea or paper, it was better to bestow a reduction of taxation, having come before the House of Commons, the people are grateful to Mr. Gladstone for having had the courage to give the preference to paper.

Yes, in its suit against paper, tea has been worsted. It had on its side the Conservatives, against it the Ministry; and it was condemned by a majority of 18 votes at the first hearing. At the second, the triumph of paper was so certain, that Mr. Disraeli and his followers declined to go to a division. To no purpose, therefore, did the *Times* cause a letter to be written to it by sham poor, in which cheap tea was recommended with all sorts of touching nonsense and the most pathetic errors of orthography. The impost that weighed upon paper

has been definitively abolished in England. Stay—I am mistaken. As the Bill has not yet been submitted to the House of Lords, an issue still remains open to the Conservative party, and Mr. Disraeli has declared his intention of not yet retiring from the contest.

A curious, almost dramatic, incident occurred on this occasion. Recalling to mind that the House of Lords last year voted against the reduction of the paper duty, Mr. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, fancied it might be dangerous to submit to it in a separate form this article of his budget, and accordingly conceived the idea of sending up, contrary to custom, his Budget in a lump to the Upper House, so that if it persisted in rejecting any one clause, it would have to reject the whole, and thus incur all the responsibility of a resolution of such gravity.

It was shuffling with a constitutional question which, not so very long ago, raised a storm in this country. Is the House of Lords constitutionally entitled to share with the House of Commons the right of taxing the people? Is it authorised to throw out such or such a portion of the Budget by the fact of being asked to sanction it? Is not the Budget an integral, essential, inviolable part of the prerogatives of those who are expressly appointed by popular election for the purpose of voting it?

The pretensions recently put forth by the House of Lords with regard to this point have caused considerable agitation in the country, and furnished materials for the democratic propagandism of Mr. Bright. Mr. Gladstone, however, helped to avoid a conflict by an expedient which the Conservatives denounce, not only as a violation of received usages, but also as an unworthy manœuvre. Need I tell you how far their wrath has carried them? It wanted but little to the unfortunate Chancellor of the Exchequer to being devoted by them to the infernal gods. Lord Robert Cecil told him to his face, among other amenities in the same style, that his conduct was that of a pettifogging attorney. To which Mr. Gladstone replied, that he would advise Lord Robert to revise his vocabulary. Deplorable scenes, that cannot fail to distress the friends of parliamentary government in a free country!

The resolution which at last emancipates paper from the exigencies of the Exchequer has diffused a satisfaction pro-

portioned to the impatience with which it was looked for. It is an event that will bear much fruit, if it were only by adding to the resources of the cheap press. For my part, I confess that I have a weakness for what are called the "penny-papers." I admire the talent displayed in them; I am struck by the tone that pervades them; I feel interested in their success, as connected with the triumph of a cause that is dear to me; and I am very anxious about their means of existence, because I cannot understand how it is possible for one penny to give newspapers, some of which contain not less than eight large sheets of printed matter, and in which you will find a multitude of interesting facts and much useful information, a detailed report of parliamentary proceedings, a faithful picture of the progress of literature and the arts, sketches of the peculiarities of social life, leading articles evidently emanating from writers of ability, and lastly, special correspondences forwarded every day from every quarter of the globe.

Among the organs of this press of the workshop, of the cottage, and the by-way, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Morning Star* merit especial attention. Not only are these two journals well written, but they are also well informed. The Parisian correspondence of the *Daily Telegraph* and that of the *Morning Star* are quite as full of matter, quite as varied, and as lively, as that of the *Times*!

It is superfluous to mention that the circulation of the penny papers is very considerable—that of the *Daily Telegraph* is immense. You may judge for yourself of the power of such a lever, worked with intelligence and moderation. The cheap press is nothing less than the peaceful advent of democracy, prepared by the education of the masses. The Conservatives do not close their eyes to this result. Thence, as regards diminution of duty, the preference they wished to give to tea over paper. The temptation was strong in a country where the consumption of tea is universal and has a sort of national importance. But the people—to their credit be it said—overcame the temptation. To those who in sugared accents advised them to take care of their belly, they replied that they would like nothing better, provided they were first allowed to take some little care of their brain.

LETTER VI.

THE ENGLISH IN CHINA.

May 15th, 1861.

FROM tea to the Chinese will not appear to you, I hope, a too sudden transition. Permit me, then, to talk a little about the Chinese.

On Saturday last the Royal Academy gave, as usual, in the National Gallery, in Trafalgar Square, a banquet to inaugurate the opening of the Exhibition. Sir Charles Eastlake, President of the Academy, occupied the chair. At this festival of the Arts, politics were represented by Lord Palmerston, the ancient of days with an eternal youth, who is present at every fight and at every feast. Mr. Gladstone, in whom the genius of finance is blended with the genius of letters, was the representative of literature. The Royal Family was personified in the Duke of Cambridge, while two brothers, Lieutenant-General Sir Hope Grant and Mr. Francis Grant, the academician, illustrated, as it were, the alliance of art and the sword.

Of all the speeches pronounced on this occasion the most interesting, perhaps, was that of Lord Elgin, from which I extract the following passage :

“ The genius of the Chinese caught a glimpse of the road that leads to military supremacy when, centuries before any other nation thought of it, it made the discovery of gunpowder. It caught a glimpse of the road that leads to maritime supremacy, when, at a period not less remote, it discovered the mariner’s compass. It caught a glimpse of the road that leads to literary supremacy when, in the tenth century, it invented the printing-press. Lastly, as my distinguished friend, on my right, Sir Edwin Landseer, has just remarked, the Chinese have not been without having, from time to time, a keen comprehension of the beautiful, whether in matter of colour or in matter of design. But it happened, that in their hands, the discovery of gunpowder produced nothing but crackers and harmless fireworks. Junks to navigate along the sea-board is all that they were able to

draw from the discovery of the mariner's compass. The art of printing has produced nothing better than stereotyped editions of Confucius, and their conception of the sublime and beautiful has resulted in little more than cynical representations of the grotesque. Be this as it may, I am disposed to believe that beneath this mass of rubbish there are sparks of the divine fire, sparks which the breath of my fellow-citizens may kindle into flame."

Lord Elgin, as it seems to me, was much less happily inspired when he undertook to 'justify the destruction of the Emperor of China's summer palace, from the point of view of the right to punish, to inflict vengeance, to terrify. To pretend to diffuse civilisation by plunder, devastation, and revenge, is to degrade the idol for which new worshippers are being sought.

It is true that Lord Elgin, in his capacity of an English man, may have his own reasons for finding it quite right that China should be treated as a Turk would treat a Moor, seeing that in 1857, in her quarrel with England, China committed the serious offence of being in the right.

It was a curious chapter of contemporaneous history. I was in London at the time, stationed then as now, in my post of impartial observer, and I beheld unrolling themselves before my eyes, incidents too full of character to allow me to resist the temptation to retrace the picture.

On the 8th October, 1856, a Chinese vessel, manned by Chinese, having been boarded in the Canton river by Chinese officers, and the latter having taken the great liberty of arresting twelve men suspected of piracy, the English consul lost no time in protesting against the act. His protest was founded on this, that the vessel in question had purchased a permit, by virtue of which it was entitled to carry the English flag. This permit, allowing that it was of some value with respect to the English themselves, could not possibly effect the result that a Chinese vessel should become an English vessel, and, as such, be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Chinese authorities. If this were the case, England would possess a very simple expedient for laying her hand upon the mercantile navies of other nations—she would only have to register their ships and sell to them the privilege of carrying her flag! Can anything be imagined more extravagant? But, what is still

more singular, the permit upon which Consul Parkes based his protest, was not, in the present instance, of any force even as regarded the English. When Sir John Bowring, Governor of the English colony of Hong-Kong, received intelligence of what had been done, he wrote with his own hand to Consul Parkes :—" It appears that the *Arrow* had not the right to hoist the British flag. The permit had expired."

It would seem after that, that there was nothing to be done but to allow the affair to fall through. But everything concurs to prove that Sir John Bowring had orders to seize upon the first excuse that presented itself for forcing the entrance to Canton. We find him, therefore, declaring that China had insulted England ! You will not have forgotten the fable of the *Animaux malades de la peste* !

Manger l'herbe d'autrui, quel crime abominable !
Rien que la mort n'était capable
D'expier ce forfait.

But the Chinese could not even reproach themselves with having eaten their neighbour's grass. They had made use of an indisputable right, and one recognised by all civilised nations—nay, they might be said to have fulfilled a duty ; for it must not be lost sight of that English merchants along the coasts of China are engaged in a deplorable trade, that of opium ; that this trade is carried on by means of Chinese smugglers, who reside in the English colony of Hong-Kong, and that the English flag actually serves, or might easily be made to serve, as a protection to a murderous traffic. Hence, the Chinese authorities are under the absolute necessity of a vigilant surveillance, which it was somewhat strange to distort into an insult.

This is what Yeh, governor of the province of Canton, would, doubtless, have replied if Might had been on his side ; but as it happened to be on the side of his enemies, he contented himself with opposing to the protests of the British officials certain observations, the tone of which was moderate and the reasoning conclusive. Yeh energetically repudiated all idea of insulting England. He replied to the charge of having failed in respect to the British flag by stating the fact that the *Arrow* had not displayed that flag, though there was certainly one on board. He remarked, very naturally, that it.

could not rest with an agent of the British Government to convert a Chinese vessel into an English one by the mere sale of a flag. Lastly, as a proof of his good will, he offered to give back to the Consul the twelve Chinamen who had been arrested. This was done: what more could be demanded of him?

But, granting that even this was too little to satisfy such unforeseen susceptibilities, there remained the practice in use among all the nations of the world, there remained the only procedure sanctioned by international law, there remained the course of reprisals. But, no. In order to open an entrance into China at the mouth of the cannon, a pretext must be found of one sort or another. How can you convince a man that you have no intention of insulting him, when he is resolutely determined to feel insulted? Besides, we all know how the lion's courtiers have their own particular mode of reasoning:—

*Manger moutons, canaille, sorte espèce,
Vous leur fites, seigneur,
En les croquant, beaucoup d'honneur.*

There you have the whole moral of the bombardment of Canton, of that heaping up of ruins, of that flood of blood-shed. And yet you will remember how, in the full fury of the Crimean campaign, when the Russians were waging war to the death against the English, the latter, out of regard for humanity and civilisation, abstained from bombarding Odessa! Lions spare one another!

That the bombardment of Canton may since have impelled the Chinese to acts of despair and revenge; that a Chinese baker may have poisoned the bread intended for the foreigners; that a price may have been set upon the head of every Englishman, &c. &c., all that is possible, but what inference is to be drawn from it except that the abuse of strength gives to weakness, driven to extremity, fatal instigations, and that evil begets evil? Through every honest heart will ring that eloquent and terrible outcry of Mr. Gladstone: "These revolting details you think strengthen your case. Why, they deepen your guilt!"

Let us suppose for an instant that a Frenchman to-morrow were to build a vessel and take it into his head to purchase an English flag: would that suffice to make the

Frenchman *ipso facto* an English subject, and his vessel an English vessel? And if, perchance, it happened that the vessel in question encountered some obstacle from the French authorities in attempting to smuggle along the French coast, would that justify England in bombarding Dieppe, or Havre?

That, however, is the principle which Lord Palmerston and his party dared to uphold in the case of the Chinese, but which, I readily acknowledge, was, to the honour of the English people, rejected by Lord Derby, Lord Lyndhurst, and the Bishop of Oxford in the House of Lords, and in the House of Commons by Mr. Cobden, Mr. Gladstone, Lord John Russell, and even by Mr. Disraeli.

Ah! it was, indeed, a grand event the Parliamentary debate which took place on this occasion. It was a noble spectacle to behold the representatives of a great nation taking in hand the cause of the weak against the strong, the cause of national honour against national ambition, the cause of foreigners who were in the right against fellow-countrymen who were in the wrong. Yes, it was a spectacle that did honour to the representative system, and I cannot think that the *Times* did justice to its adversaries in attributing to sordid manœuvres, and to a vile spirit of ambition or intrigue, that which was so evidently an august insurrection of the human conscience.

Besides, here is an incident that shows what was the first effect of the discussion. At the moment of the division some four or five hundred persons were crowded together in Westminster Hall, awaiting with impatience the announcement of the result. All at once some members came in sight, and the cry was raised: "Ministers are beaten!" On this, frantic shouts of applause. The crowd watches for the victorious speakers as they come out, gathers round them, and congratulates them. It was a genuine ovation, from which Mr. Cobden and Mr. Milner Gibson, the mover and the seconder of the successful motion, were only able to withdraw themselves by jumping into the first vehicle that drove up. Mr. Gladstone, whose eloquence lighted up the entire debate, was loudly applauded, as it is almost needless to observe. So also was Lord John Russell, though it was remarked, that he walked as one depressed and bowed down with sorrow. Was

it because it was over many of his old friends that he had triumphed?

Unhappily for the cause of justice, Lord Palmerston on this occasion represented two things to which the English are closely attached—their pride as Englishmen, and their interests as merchants. Where the spirit of nationality and the spirit of traffic are in the ascendant, it rarely happens that the weight of purely chivalrous considerations turns the scale. Lord Palmerston, when he endeavoured to force the gates of the Celestial Empire, at every risk, acted as the representative of the interests of those Lancashire manufacturers who, at the news of the conclusion of the treaty of 1842 with China, threw their hats in the air and exclaimed: "Let each one of the three hundred millions of people who inhabit China buy a cotton night-cap, and our machines will be in full work!"

Nor were the interests of the manufacturers alone at stake. At the present day is not tea, next to cotton, the principal staple of the English commerce? It was reasonable then to expect to see men of the middle class in England offer a cordial pardon to Lord Palmerston for employing a means which, in their eyes, was justified by the end. *Salus populi suprema lex*; and with "a nation of shopkeepers"—to make use of a well-known phrase—the *salus populi* is—the question of markets!

Now it must be admitted that the Chinese are not a very interesting people, though Lord Palmerston went a little too far when he spoke of them as "barbarians." Barbarians? Hardly that, good my lord. Look, I pray you, at Madam at her breakfast. The tea she sips with so much relish, the porcelain cup out of which she drinks it, the folding screen that protects her from draughts, the ornamented carpet trodden by her little feet, the handscreen that guards her pink and white skin from the glare of the fire—for all these our civilisation is indebted to that of the "barbarians!"

The offence, the real offence, committed by China is that of closing her seaports and cities against foreigners, of isolating herself from the great human family. But, before punishing the Chinese for this, it would be as well to begin by putting aside the principle of doing as you please with your own, and I doubt if England is quite prepared to renounce that maxim.

On the other hand, the very impossibility of penetrating into the interior of China justifies us in distrusting the exactness of certain singularly dark narratives. One day I read in the *Times*, that Yeh had put to death 70,000 individuals within his government, which made me shudder, until I recovered my serenity by remembering that the *Times* had no means of knowing much more on that point than myself.

Be that as it may, condemned by the House of Commons, Lord Palmerston hoped to gain his cause by appealing to the country, and he was not mistaken. Parliament having been dissolved, it was he who triumphed. And what a triumph! Mr. Cobden was beaten at Huddersfield, while Mr. Bright and Mr. Milner Gibson were abandoned by Manchester. But among the enemies of the old Ministry how many more were left upon the field, from Mr. Arthur Gordon to Mr. Fox, the eloquent Unitarian minister—from Mr. Edward Miall to Mr. Layard—the author, if I mistake not, of that fine programme of administrative reform: “The right man in the right place.” Of those who had ventured to protest against the Palmerstonian policy with regard to China, some few, indeed, escaped from the general rout: Mr. Gladstone, for instance, to whom the University of Oxford remained faithful, and Lord John Russell, who succeeded in touching the not too tender hearts of the City merchants. But, for all that, Lord Palmerston’s victory was not the less complete. The Cobdenites were crushed, the Peelites struck down, the Derbyites greatly weakened.

I leave you to draw your own conclusion.

LETTER VII

THE VOLUNTEERS.

May 25th, 1861

ONE of the motives which, at the time of the French Revolution, led Wilberforce to break with the warlike policy of his intimate friend, William Pitt, was, that the conflagration of the world, so obstinately fed by the son of Chatham, tended to give the English people military habits and pursuits,

incompatible with the nature of its power, and contrary to its genius—the offspring, both the one and the other, of industry and freedom.

If Wilberforce were now living, what would he say on seeing the streets, the squares, the parks of London traversed, morning and evening, by bands of volunteers of every colour and every profession—volunteers grey, brown, and green—volunteers booted and not booted—volunteers with spectacles and without them, all marching with a resolute step, music in front, and musket in hand !

It is curious to mark with what youthful ardour this grave people has applied itself to playing at soldiers in the piping time of peace. Barristers, physicians, lawyers, shopkeepers, shop-boys, I know not how many others, hold themselves ready to flash their sword from the scabbard, and are anxious to learn how to kill *secundum artem*. A little more, and the very clergy would have mixed themselves up with the movement. There is nothing but reviews, marching, counter-marching, and sham fights. Nothing can equal the facility with which these impromptu warriors cut to pieces an imaginary foe. Superfluous to add, that the terrible engagements which take place, are always followed by great effusion of porter and ale. Courage naturally creates an appetite. What, then, can be more attractive than combats which cost the combatants nothing more than a faithful obedience to the laws of hygiene ? It is the theory of a good bargain applied to heroism.

I cannot tell if ~~man~~ will ever attain to the possession of enough common sense to renounce the amiable science of cutting each other's throats; but in the meantime, what rude contradictions are being given to the anticipations of the optimists ! In vain has man invented the steam-engine, furrowed the surface of the earth with railways, and given, by the application of electricity to the transmission of news, Ariel's wings to human speech. In vain has the world itself been made so small that it is no longer possible to get far away from one another, not the more for that are the nations disposed to march towards their common end, with their arms round each other's neck.

Their material association appears to have contributed but little to their moral association. Russians, French, English,

and Italians, have fertilized with their blood the distant plains of the Crimea. Italy has witnessed battles which, for entire days in succession, have kept death hot at work. At the very moment that I am writing, a fratricidal war has been declared—and on what grounds, great heavens!—between the Northern and the Southern States in that new world republic, which the genius of Washington made so united and so great. Is there work enough on hand for the destroying angel? Poor Mr. Cobden! While you are congratulating yourself that you have brought to such a happy conclusion a treaty of commerce which is to bring France and England together in the bonds of an imperishable friendship, I hear the sound of the drum, and running to my window behold below in the street a number of your compatriots marching along, armed to the teeth, and that in virtue of the old adage incessantly repeated by wise men and fools: *Si vis pacem, para bellum!*

Let us open the first journal that comes to hand. What do we read in it?

“That the ‘Riflemen’ of the City of London were passed in review on Monday last by Colonel Mac Murdo, on Primrose Hill, and that their bearing was eminently martial.”

“That on Saturday, at Hampstead, there was some admirable skirmishing.”

“That on Tuesday the Duke of Newcastle manoeuvred ten companies in Nottingham Forest, in presence of an immense crowd of spectators.”

“That on Monday, at Pontypool Park, in the county of Monmouth, a great military fête was held, at which two silver bugles were presented.”

“That on Saturday the Volunteers of the Inns of Court in London went to pay a visit to their companions in arms, the Volunteers of the University of Cambridge, in compliance with a brotherly challenge despatched by the bellicose students to the bellicose men of the law,” &c.

If we are to believe the eye-witnesses, the results, in the last-mentioned case, were worthy of remark. The volunteers of the Inns of Court, in particular, proved that there was in each of them the stuff to make a soldier, and that if occasion required, they would present as bold a front under the shako as under a powdered wig. The Prince of Wales was there,

attended by General Bruce, and left the ground delighted with what he had seen. The leading journal of England is not comfortable at the idea that the time has passed when war summoned only poor devils without food or lodgment to furnish the raw material for its triumphs. There is henceforth a chance that the honour of being food for powder will be shared by individuals having a gable end on to the street. It is thus, for lack of a better path, that the world travels on towards equality!

And, I pray you, make a note of this,—all that I have just told you is passing among a people who have hitherto made it a boast that they were not military, even after having produced so many soldiers of mark, so many illustrious generals, and after chronicling so many victories in their annals. What! all these reviews, all these evolutions, all these parades, all these festivals of old Mars, in the country where the regular soldier never appears in public with any other weapon than a light cane, and where the policeman, instead of a sword, carries a lantern! See, then, what the world has come to in the year of grace 1861, in the age of the Treaties of the Holy Alliance, of European Congresses, of diplomatic arbitration, and of all that had been dreamed of in the philosophy of the good Abbé Saint Pierre!

It is true that there exists in England a Peace Society, whose prophets are no less personages than Mr. Cobden and the Quaker Mr. Bright. This Society, whose views and objects are represented in the *Morning Star* with great ability and loftiness of tone, held its annual meeting the day before yesterday, and uttered its usual lamentations over the abominable spectacle of beholding man the born enemy of man, *homo homini lupus*.

Whatever objections reason could suggest against the practice of firing palaces in barbarous countries to prove the excellence of civilization, and of protecting, for the greater glory of commerce, the homicidal trade in opium, was said, and certainly well said, by the Rev. H. Richard. He reminded his hearers, with emotion, of the visit of our *Orphéonistes*; he extolled Mr. Cobden to the clouds, and showed how much the cause of peace ought to gain by the Treaty of Commerce concluded between France and England. Nothing could be better. But while the Rev. H. Richard, the Rev.

Mr. Hamilton, the Rev. S. Clarkson, the Rev. D. Turner, the Rev. W. H. Bonner—all of them, as you will observe, Churchmen—were protesting with all their might in the hall of Finsbury Chapel in favour of perpetual peace, denouncing the Volunteer movement as a demonstration full of insult and defiance, anathematising the principle of war, groaning over its laurels, exposing the tragic puerility of its motives in many a case—saying, in short, with Montaigne, only with less coarseness, “*Toute l'asie se perdit et se consomma en guerres pour le maquerellage de Paris*;”—yes, while all this was going on, a hundred and twenty thousand men were hurrying towards Regent's Park to be present at a Volunteer Review!

And now what conclusion is to be drawn from this? That with the English the wind is in a warlike quarter? Far from it. If there is one opinion here shared by all alike and fully adopted, it is that England should dread, like death itself, whatever is likely to drag it too far into the affairs of the Continent. In this country of practical common sense people do not forget what it cost the English nation to be made an accomplice of the violent policy of Pitt. The enormous amount of taxation remains to prevent that remembrance from being too easily effaced from the memory of the rich, and yet more so from that of the poor. Those of our own countrymen are strangely mistaken who attach any serious importance to the speech of Mr. Peacock, who declared in a recent debate that “It was the duty of England to propagate in Europe the principle of primogeniture, as France has propagated that of the division of property.” There is nothing more opposed to the tendencies of modern England than to draw the sword either for or against mere ideas. The policy that impelled Pitt to oppose, sword in hand, the propagandism of revolutionary ideas may possibly still exist as a respectable tradition among the most fanatical section of the English aristocracy, but the current of public opinion is in quite an opposite direction.

Even if decidedly material interests were at stake, England would not easily resolve to run the risk of another Waterloo. We are in Rome, she suffers cruelly from it, but leaves us there. Yesterday we were in Syria, this made her shudder, but she would have allowed us to remain, had it suited us to take root there,—merely saying, like the *Times*, to save her

dignity: "What a folly these eternal seekers of adventures are committing! So much the worse for them; after all, that is their affair." If France were to take a step towards the Rhine, would England go beyond a war of words such as that which sprang up out of the annexation of Nice and Savoy? Frankly, I doubt it.

Ah! if we were to stretch our hand towards Antwerp—well, then, perhaps she would, because in that case, *proximus ardet Ucagonia*.

But, if that be so, what means, you will ask, this display of martial ardour? Whence this sudden taste for military exercises? A patriotic precaution, nothing more—an ardent desire, and one in itself highly honourable, to place themselves in a condition, without taking any account of money, lost time, and other sacrifices, to defend, at the critical moment, their country and their homes.

What the Volunteer movement really represents—and this is the serious, this is the profoundly deplorable aspect of the question—is suspicion and distrust. Englishmen, though they do not admit the fact—not even to themselves, perhaps—are tormented by a phantom called Invasion. They would not be far from loving us if they could only, once for all, believe in our friendship; if they could banish the fancy that we are afflicted, as with an incurable disease, with a madness for territorial aggrandizement; if they did not regard us as enslaved, beyond redemption, by the genius of conquest.

This notion blinds them to such an extent, that it deprives them of the faculty of seeing the most simple things in their true colours. Talk to them of the immense and generous efforts made by France for the emancipation of Italy, they reply, "Nice!" Tell them how chivalrous it is on the part of France to greet with the most enthusiastic cheers the creation of a nation of twenty-five millions of men, whose immediate vicinity is a breach in the influence of the French people on the Continent, and might, in the event of another coalition, become a danger, and they answer, "Savoy!" I do not believe that there is a single Englishman who places any faith in the disinterestedness of our expedition to Syria. You French, you went to Syria to protect the Christians, to save the Maronites from a second massacre! Tell that to the marines!

This unhappy frame of mind which I here indicate to you, furnishes the key to much that would be otherwise inexplicable. How distressing, that England should be more absolutely separated from France by suspicion than by the Channel !

LETTER VIII.

DANGER INCURRED BY THE SHOPMEN.

May 30th, 1861.

THE Volunteer movement and the question of obtaining soldiers when wanted, recal to my recollection a very amusing discussion which took place at the time of the great revolt in India.

Who in England would ever have dreamt of seeing, previous to the insurrection of the Sepoys, that, in a well-constituted society, it was possible to dispense with fifty thousand tall fellows employed in presenting a letter on a silver salver to Lady "This;" in yawning in the entrance-hall of Lord "That;" in exhibiting themselves before a door, with an impudent smile upon their lips, or in standing behind the carriage of some worthy old dame—great he-fellows, with powdered heads, and carrying in their hands a long silly-looking stick?

But that is what actually happened ~~wards~~ the month of October, 1857. The thing was not only said, but printed. It was proposed that some one Duke or another, should go up to his valet, and say to him : "My good fellow, you are of no use to me. I am not blaming you, for I pay you for that. But, you see, there are men to be killed three thousand leagues away, and you have just the build required for a hero. Besides, your country calls you—so, off with you!"

You will object that the valet dismissed by one master would easily find service with another. Not so. The plan proposed comprised a conspiracy of all heads of families, male or female, against all domestics of the male sex. The point of honour was to be at stake. Better than that, this massacre of the innocents was to be made a question of loyalty,

the Queen being invited to set the example, in order to remove all excuse for hesitation.

Pray do not imagine that this was one of *Mr. Punch's* pleasantries. It was really a serious proposition. To ask of the aristocracy to make a sacrifice of the lustre shed upon it by its gorgeous valets! Bless me! People do not jest about such matters in England! The more so that it was no trifling affair that was at issue. At that period, according to the last census, there were 1,500,000 servants of both sexes. Supposing that the proportion of the fair sex to the strong was as ten to one, there remained 150,000 males who, making every allowance, would have furnished an army of 50,000 strapping fellows well fitted to kill their man.

But that is not all. The idea in question rose out of a discussion that had lasted a full fortnight. What was to be done with those interesting and virile youths, whose lives are passed in opening and shutting pasteboard boxes; in displaying stuffs to my lady; in waiting while she makes up her mind; in smiling upon her while so engaged, if she happens to be pretty, and in vaulting over the counter—which has gained for those young men the name of “Counter-skippers?” There was food for powder here, if anywhere, and, therefore, what answer was to be given to those who wished to put them in the way of hurrying off to the relief of Lucknow?

Without going so far as to assign the noble profession of arms, as it is called, as the necessary destination of mankind here below, it is quite permissible to believe that young men could find some more suitable employment than in unrolling ribands and measuring tape. Where linendrapers and silk-mercers make use of men, would it not be much more natural to employ women? Would the silk lose anything in being turned over by their little white hands? And would there be nothing to praise, from a moral and human point of view, in a system which provided an honest livelihood for so many poor creatures who, in only too many cases, can procure no bread but what is earned by prostitution?

It is true that it requires a tolerably strong frame to exhaust the delights of the liberty of constant motion; to be incessantly taking down, and putting back in their place,

samples of goods; to carry heavy burdens of light things; to be continually going up and down stairs; to climb a ladder; and never to rest but for half-an-hour to swallow some dinner. But as women cost less, what hinders the engaging of a greater number of them, and so diminishing for each individual the duration of labour? Besides, with regard to the most arduous part of the work, what prevents hiring a small number of men to be specially employed on heavy jobs? It is what is done in Germany, at least at Frankfort.

After this fashion argued not a few individuals, who without further ceremony exclaimed, "Let us ship off these counter-skippers." Gently! You are reckoning without your host. A long cry arose in protest, proceeding from lips on which a prayer is a command, and a pout a power. Yes; the ladies cried out against it—there was the difficulty.

They are so polite, these young men, said they! They think themselves obliged to pay one so much attention, in their white cravats! Above all, they are so patient! Show me that—no, this—no, that other—no, no, that other one. You remain an hour in the shop, and then go away without buying anything; but the young man is too gallant to take any notice of it. This is really what we call shopping. But, gracious Heavens! what would become of this supreme pleasure if we were forced to be face to face with persons of our own sex, who would treat us on a footing of equality, would presume at times to be out of temper, and would lose patience with our sauntering through their world of curious things! Farewell to the charm! The making purchases, which is now a pleasure, would become a business.

In some such style as this the ladies expressed themselves, quite satisfied that it would never occur to any living soul to attribute to their reasoning the slightest suspicion of coquetry. Fie upon it! *Honne soit qui mal y pense.*

However, as there is never an army without deserters, an Amazon, escaping from the camp, took up the question against the "counter-skippers," whom she boldly called by that name. In a letter, signed "Lady of Rank," she charged her sex's *protégés* with having—just contrary to what was said of them—bad manners, and, what is more unpardonable, with sometimes presuming to be familiar. I would bet anything you please that the last reproach was thrown in by

my Lady, for fear of its being supposed that she was going down hill.

Be that as it may, the action was hotly engaged, as you perceive, on both sides. There remained to be seen if all these young shopmen, on being turned out into the streets, would go straight to the Horse-Guards. For there was no intention, be it understood, of compelling them to do so, law in hand. In France we should not stand upon so much ceremony. Gallic logic, like geometry, being of opinion that the shortest route from one point to another is a straight line, we have come to this that we simply say, "The nation wants so many soldiers. Good. Draw lots, and those upon whom the lot falls, provided they be of the regulation stature, must be prepared, whether they like it or not, to draw the sword when called upon to do so." In England, however, this sort of thing would not do. The system of enticing men to enlist exists there in full force. Before a peasant will consent to cover himself with glory, the recruiting sergeant has to sing to him, much as they do in *La Dame Blanche*, "Ah! quel plaisir! ah! quel plaisir! ah! quel plaisir d'être soldat!" If this prospect has any charms for him, he receives a shilling, and the bargain is struck. If not, his native land must submit with resignation. Whence it results that the question of knowing whether the dismissal of the shopmen would, or would not, have the desired effect, depended upon their greater or less inclination to don the military uniform. Would they do it?

No, it was answered, because the English military system is, for all classes except the most degraded, an object of horror; and because, until a radical reform is introduced into that system, no one will regard it as any disgrace to wield the yard measure, or as any honour to carry a sabre by his side.

The reasoning appeared conclusive, in a country where a man is nothing if not a "gentleman," and where a private soldier has little chance of ever becoming one.

LETTER IX.

A DEBATE UPON THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION.

May 30th, 1861.

“THE British constitution is on its trial.” Such was the statement which, not long since, Prince Albert, the Consort of the Queen, did not hesitate publicly to make.

It was a bold thing to say, and it caused some excitement. What! That Constitution of which Great Britain is so proud, which she holds out with such self-satisfaction for the imitation of other peoples, and before which the genius of Montesquieu bent so reverentially,—one dared to assert, and that from an exalted position, that, after all, its essence was not immortal! What wonder this was treated as a scandal!

And yet a storm is working up from the horizon, which might some day or other threaten to shake the very foundations of this so much vaunted Constitution.

Does the right of voting the taxes, of granting the Crown the necessary subsidies, of regulating, in a word, the financial situation of the country, belong exclusively to the Commons, or is it a prerogative which they share with the House of Lords?

Such is the problem proposed in the last debates of Parliament. As yet, it is but a dark speck on the horizon; but that is the usual way in which a tempest announces its approach.

Hitherto it has been customary to send up the Budget to the House of Lords, submitting it to their Lordships' revisal, article by article; but it has been also customary for the Upper House to abstain from all aggressive control. Now, last year, the Lords having, contrary to their usual practice of holding themselves aloof from financial questions, thrown out the clause which abolished the paper duty, and the House of Commons having this year restored that clause in deference to public opinion—which, on this side of the Channel, is supreme over all—a collision of the two Houses seemed inevitable. How did Mr. Gladstone act? In the hope of averting the collision, he sent up, as I once before stated, the Budget in a lump; thus giving the Lords the opportunity of voting it as a whole,

and withdrawing from discussion an article which the Lords could not directly sanction without sacrificing their dignity, and perhaps their convictions, nor reject a second time without exposing the State to an intestine shock.

Unhappily, an expedient is not a solution.

The Conservatives uttered loud outcries. They denounced Mr. Gladstone's efforts to avert the danger of a conflict, as a violation, at once presumptuous and hypocritical, of the prerogatives of one of the three powers of the State. They quoted precedents; they used all manner of arguments; they asked with bitterness if it was not a mockery to present to the Lords for revision that which they had no power to revise; they affirmed that the right of rejecting the whole implied the right of rejecting a part—and much more in the same strain.

Mr. Horsman, one of the most vigorous orators of his party and its most uncompromising representative, suddenly appeared in the character of an innovator, with a view to better serve, on this occasion, the Conservative policy. Precedents were quoted, and they were in favour of the House of Lords; but, even were it otherwise, the real question at issue was, whether or not the financial control of the Upper House was in conformity with the public interests! Where was the use of growing so petrified in a worship of the past—assuming that the past did pronounce against the Lords—as systematically to withdraw from the guarantee of a double examination such an important department of legislation as the finances? A little more, and, carried away by the transports of his Conservative zeal, Mr. Horsman would have exclaimed, "If your Constitution halts, set it straight again. If there were no God, we should have to invent one."

To all this the opposite party replied:—

"That if the practice had crept in of submitting to the House of Lords the examination of the Budget article by article, their Lordships had never thought of pretending to share the exclusive prerogative of the House of Commons as regards taxation."

"That their decision last year having revealed the inconveniences of this practice, it had become necessary to put an end to it."

"That the right of the House of Lords to examine the Budget as a whole, and to reject it bodily, had a purely

political character, and was bestowed upon it as a means of censuring or checking, in certain circumstances, the course of administration."

"That if, on the contrary, its right was recognised to extend its supervision to each separate article of the Budget, and to modify it as it pleased, its intervention, instead of being political, would become financial, in the most absolute sense of the word."

"That there would be immense danger in that."

"That as nothing could force the Commons to accept, when sent back to them, the Budget which the other House had thought proper to modify, frightful skirmishings would ensue."

"That this sort of skirmishings, always dangerous, would become more particularly so with reference to the Budget, which admits of no delay, as the State must have the means of living."

"That there was a flagrant attempt at usurpation in the pretensions recently put forward by the House of Lords, or in its name."

"That the House of Commons, in England, had always had in its own peculiar province the voting of imposts, in virtue of its election by the people, who have to pay them, and who would know how, if things were pushed to extremities, to support their representatives."

Such is a very succinct but perfectly faithful sketch of the question which at this moment seriously occupies the minds of earnest thinkers.

Is it not singular that people in this country should not yet know what line of conduct to adopt on a point of such importance? Is it not strange that English statesmen should not sooner have come to an understanding as to the nature, extent, conditions, and logical consequences of the respective prerogatives of the two branches of the Legislature? To hear Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Horsman, and others, declare that "the Constitution is this;" while Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and others, again, swear by the great gods, that "the Constitution is that,"—would not one suppose that the British Constitution was a thing of yesterday? It is true that it does not exist, digested and condensed in clear set formulas. It is an affair of wont and usage, of opinion, tradition, precedent.

And there are precedents for, and precedents against, as the late debates have sufficiently proved.

As I shall have to acquaint you with the consequences of this great dispute, should it be prolonged and envenomed so far as to cause public opinion to grow heated, I postpone for the present the reflections it suggests as to the value of the double-chamber system, and as to the artificial construction of Society in England.

LETTER X.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

ONE day last week there took place the funeral of Francis, seventh Duke of Bedford, the eldest brother of Lord John Russell, and head of the illustrious house of that name..

If I am not mistaken, there is a village near Caen, called Roussel. Some years ago the parish priest, who was collecting subscriptions for a church bell, applied without hesitation to the Duke of Bedford, founding his claim upon the circumstance that the village in question was the cradle of his grace's family. The Duke did better than subscribe—he made a present of the bell to the worthy priest.

This anecdote tells all that there is to be said as to the antiquity and origin of the house of Russell. The fact is, that it dates from William the Conqueror, and that its prosperity is derived from the plunder of the monasteries—no slight merit in the special country of aristocrats.

It is unnecessary for me to recapitulate all the associations which attach to the march of this family across the historic page. We behold a Russell bearing the sceptre at the coronation of Charles II.; but, on the other hand, we see another Russell executed as a traitor in Lincoln's Inn Fields, for having conspired against tyranny. It is related that one day James II. having met the father of the decapitated patriot in Salisbury, and having asked his advice on several points that were then causing him much anxiety, the poor man replied with emotion, "Sire, I am an old man and no longer good

for much. I once had a son who would have been useful to your Majesty."

It is, indeed, quite certain that if William Russell entered into Monmouth's conspiracy, it was from hatred of the abuses of royal power, but by no means from hatred of the principle. He would have been one of the firmest supporters of the throne, had it been possible for him, under such conditions, to have watched over the preservation of the public liberties; and that is the spirit which has generally characterised the political acts of his descendants.

The best funeral oration that can be pronounced over the deceased Duke of Bedford, consists in recalling to remembrance that he declared himself strongly in favour of Catholic Emancipation, and supported his brother, Lord John Russell, in the efforts made by him to bring about the triumph of the Reform Bill. He was a genuine Whig; nothing more assuredly, but nothing less. His death, however, has not produced much sensation, because for some time past he had withdrawn from the public stage. After distinguishing himself as a member of the House of Commons, he seems to have quitted the scene on entering the House of Lords, where nobody ever heard the sound of his voice; as if, in changing his atmosphere, he had made a compact with silence. It should also be added, that of late years he appeared to have given up even his habit of dumb politics, living like a country gentleman, only making his influence felt around Woburn, his residence, by the cottages he built for the labourers on his estate, and, whether weary of the uproar, or from modesty, or brotherly attachment, leaving to Lord John the duty of personifying the historic splendour of their house. His influence on public affairs, however, was not the less considerable for being silent and concealed. But men rarely regret the death of those whose life has not made the noise which so frequently usurps the name of fame.

LETTER XI.

EPSOM RACES.

June 1st, 1861.

Epsom Races!

How could I write to you of any other matter, living as I do in the heart of London and breathing the air that is breathed there! Who is there that has troubled his head about the new passage of arms during the past week between the Opposition and the Ministry; or because the interminable question of the paper duty has been taken up as hotly as ever; or because the existence of the Cabinet was for a little while in suspense; or because the Conservatism, when weighed in the Parliamentary balance, proved too light by some fifteen votes? Mr. Gladstone and his Budget; Mr. Disraeli and his pretensions; the chances of those who want to get in; the danger of those who want to stay where they are; the House of Lords; the House of Commons; the interests of the tax-payers; the fate of the Constitution; the policy Ah! who cares for any of these things just now? The order of the day, that which has given every Englishman a fever for some days past; that which has caused one of my friends to come and see me from the heart of Ireland; that which has made another of my friends write to me from Manchester—"secure for me, at any price, a seat on the top of an omnibus;" that about which everybody is speaking, without having a word to say about any other thing in the world; that about which, consequently, I cannot help writing to you, is what they call here "The Great Event,"—it is, in one word, "The Derby!" .

Last Tuesday a man in rags came to my door; he was carrying about some flowers in a basket, which he prayed me to buy of him. The poor man's appearance touched me. His face so pale, his voice so broken by emotion, his eyes so full of entreaty! No doubt he had left at home a sick old mother, a wife in the family way, children hungering for their daily bread—who could tell? He said to me, "It's

true, sir, I have not a farthing, and to-morrow is the race-day." How could I resist such a pathetic appeal?

The Derby, in fact, is, in England, the universal *fête*,—the *fête* of all others,—the *fête* eternally the same and eternally new, which for one day causes one and the same life to be lived by great and small, by lords and their lackeys, by great ladies and the old fruit-woman at the corner of the street, by statesmen and lawyers, by beggars and lame men, by devotees and roués, by wise men and fools, or, as they say here, by all the world and his wife. Farewell to business on that day, to labour and care, to quarrels and ambitions—I do believe I had almost added, to love! Parliament does not sit. To all intents and purposes it is a blank day in the City. There is nothing doing at the Bank. The shops might as well be closed. The man of letters leaves his pen, the painter his colours, little Johnny his broom, and my lady the novel she has just commenced. The attorney for a moment abandons his victim; politicians agree to let the world go round without meddling with it; and the pastors of souls send their folds to the devil.

I am rather pleased with Lord Palmerston's *mot* when he invited the House of Commons to give themselves a holiday on account of the celebration of the "Isthmian Games;" and I am sure the ancient Greeks attached not more importance to the games celebrated at Corinth than the English do to the Epsom races. But other times, other manners. At the Isthmian Games the fellow-countrymen of Pericles went to see men dispute the prize for wrestling, leaping, throwing the *discus* or the *javelin*, for music and for poetry; whereas Lord Palmerston's fellow-countrymen go to see horses run, and to eat cold veal; for however great may be my desire to idealise the description, I cannot overlook this detail. It is too true that champagne, soda water, ale, gin, and eatables, and after the pleasant trouble of carrying them, the equally agreeable task of getting rid of them, play the chief part in the pleasures of the day. To tell the truth, the English never profess to love art for art's sake, and I am afraid that what most pleases them in horse-racing is the excuse it furnishes for national drinking and patriotic indigestions. This by way of reply to a certain ultra-Saxon newspaper, which, the day before yesterday, not satisfied with taunting the French with their military

reviews, and the Spaniards with their bull-fights, congratulated England on her inaccessibility to any but noble passions, and on her showing, even in the choice of her amusements, her superiority to other peoples.

Be that as it may, it was expected with impatience, this all-important moment! For the last week past there was not a hosier's shop that did not display in its windows blue and green veils destined to save from the ravages of sun and dust the complexions of the fashionables of the counter; and for many days the indispensable costume for the races was one of the temptations presented by Nicoll to the gaze of promenaders in Regent Street.

At last, the sun of Wednesday rose. Up to Monday the weather had been admirable; on Tuesday it became threatening; even on Wednesday morning the sky appeared loaded with clouds foreboding evil. But there is a providence that watches over the races, and long before noon the people of England breathed freely, feeling themselves safe from that dreadful national calamity, a wet Derby-day.

As London on the race-day is no longer in London, I naturally went where it went, that is to say, to Epsom, which is some 22 kilometres from the monster city.

More than one road leads to Epsom—so far it resembles Rome. Those who love art for art's sake, and races for the racing, and who do not pretend to appreciate the pleasures of the great national pilgrimage—these take the railway to Kingston for seven and sixpence, and thence across country to the promised land, either in a carriage—if they have sent on one to meet them there—or in a vehicle of some sort, if they do not mind paying dear for the accommodation, or on foot, if a little exercise suits alike their constitution and their purse.

It is at Kingston that the second and third class passengers alight, to make their way bravely on foot for two leagues and more, at first along a beaten path, and then across the fields. A valiant enterprise, in truth, when dust and sun are of the party! Without taking into account that for nearly a league you are stopped at every step and brought to a standstill by inexorable small urchins who, with the hand wide open, fire at you, point blank, the traditional, "Remember the Races!" Once in the fields, you are still exposed to annoyance. There,

on both sides of the path, stand on guard rude sentinels in gaiters, armed with long poles, fellows absolutely inaccessible to the seductions of a smile, and who oppose to the light "chaff" to which they are subjected by the passing mob, the callous hide of sturdy old tenants of the soil. Take care not to step out of the path to gather a dandelion, or woe be unto you!

Thoroughly to enjoy this unequalled day, to relish its drunken joyousness, to comprehend its grandeur, it is by the good old road one should go, by that along which roll pell-mell, through an ocean of dust and beneath a May sky, all that moves and all that is barely able to move on wheels: carriages four-in-hand, cabs, omnibuses, hackney coaches, tilburys, stylish phaetons, rickety carts, the travelling shops of dealers in ginger beer, lumbering cars, moveable magazines of eatables, furniture-waggons filled with rosy-cheeked lasses and young housewives in joyous mood.

It is a sight to be remembered to see all that mob singing, swearing, chaffing one another, laughing at everything, forgetting everything, but feeling happy. For the moment it is the triumph of democracy. In the scale of levellers I am convinced that the Derby-day holds the third place—after love, which is only an occasional leveller, and death. On the road to Epsom carts and carriages are on such neighbourly terms—there is something so common to all the travellers, male and female, in the all-absorbing spectacle, that in passing yon red-cheeked lass who from the elevation of her rolling throne salutes her with a familiar gesture, the Duchess of * * * positively smiles. Two things in this world below teach equality—first of all, great sorrows, and secondly, great joys.

On such occasions there is always an immense gathering together of people—this year it may be said to have been formidable. Nothing can be more imposing than the aspect of the Downs after twelve o'clock. I do not remember ever having seen in any one place such an ant-hill of human beings. The number of heads pressed closely together on both sides of the course defied all calculation. A demand of ten shillings for the right of admission to the brilliant sanctuary known by the name of the Grand Stand proving too feeble a barrier, the refreshment rooms had been invaded at an early hour and were gorged with epicures; while outside, the terraces bent

beneath the weight of spectators of both sexes. Exactly opposite, on a rising ground, was such a mass of carriages, that it would be difficult to give you an idea of it. Beheld from a distance, the effect was strangely picturesque and even grand.

I was on one of the upper terraces of the Grand Stand when the first race came off, the winner of which was *Wedding*. “*Le cheval du Baron Nivière!*” I exclaimed with a patriotic weakness which you would easily understand if you were living in a foreign land; “*La France! vive La France!*” The Englishmen by whom I was surrounded smiled good-naturedly, and congratulated me with a cordial politeness, as if I had been the owner of the winner.

This first race, indeed, was but a small affair while waiting for the great one. I went down on to the Downs, and while the dilettanti of the place pressed in crowded groups towards the inclosure into which had just been led the horses that were to contend for the great prize, I set forth to ramble, in the character of a disinterested observer, over the hill opposite to the Grand Stand, and up and down between the rows of carriages that covered it. In those carriages, from which the horses had been taken out, for the most part open and already transformed into miniature banqueting halls, swarms of the fair daughters of Albion, waited upon by elegant cavaliers, were giving themselves up, in order to gain sufficient strength for the emotions of the coming race, to that colossal consumption of cold fowl, pigeon pie, ham, and salad, which is one of the characteristic features of the Epsom Races. It was wonderful to behold the rapidity with which the basket of provisions, the famous “hamper,” was emptied. Wonderful, too, to observe the intrepidity with which beauty attacked the wine of Champagne. *

On all sides of you, mixed up with the horses taken out of the carriages, you saw all manner of people. Here the inevitable gipsy, her head enveloped in a red and yellow kerchief, was watching for the moment when Miss So-and-so would desire to know the day of her marriage, and how many children she would have. There a blind man—did he mean an epigram?—was reading aloud the Holy Scriptures. There a worker of miracles was swallowing, without seeming to know it, whole reams of paper—a delicate allusion to the subject of the recent debates in Parliament. A little further

two boxers by way of amusement exchanged furious blows in commemoration of the fight between Sayers and Heenan which a short time since caused such a disgraceful excitement throughout England and America:

There can be no Epsom Races without a frightful hullabaloo. It is the regular thing. This time the hideous uproar of musical instruments was as deafening as could be desired under the circumstances. I saw some poor little girls, not more than seven years old at the outside, blowing into clarionets as if they were going to give up the ghost. So young, and forced to gain their own livelihood! One of the favourite sports of the place, indeed the fashionable sport, consists in shying sticks at other sticks stuck into the earth and surrounded by a fright of a fence. This is called "Aunt Sally." Woe to whoso passes too near to those who are applying themselves to this amiable diversion! My hat had the misfortune to receive a terrible blow, and my head was naturally not far off.

Among those with whom I was able to shake hands in passing by, I may mention Thackeray, the illustrious author of *Vanity Fair*. For what purpose did the great satirist come to this scene of confusion? To observe? In that case, there was no lack of matter, for every variety of our species was to be found there, in close quarters and brought under the same glance as if melting into one another,—from the young lord admired for his turn-out, to the juggler admired for his feats of strength—from the great lady displaying her lace, to the gipsy displaying her rags—from the betting man, trembling lest he should not lay his head on the pillow of a *millionnaire*, to the beggar, happy in having made a fortune of a few pence—from the woman of pleasure with painted cheeks, to the Ethiopian with a sham complexion! Neither, indeed, was there any lack of matter for painful reflections, had it been the proper time of philosophising,—in such bold relief stood forth the woeful contrasts presented by modern civilisation!

Hark! the bell is ringing. The jockeys have been weighed. The grand race is about to begin. The competitors proceed from the enclosure, in which they have been passed in review by the amateurs, towards the starting post. They are eighteen in number, and among them *Royallien*, a French horse belonging to the Count de Lagrange. But alas! *Royallien*

is neither first nor second favourite. It is to *Dundee*, to *Diophantus*, but especially to *Dundee*, that the opinions of connoisseurs and the sympathies of the crowd have beforehand assigned the victory. *Dundee* and *Diophantus* are the two chief actors in view in the betting drama. An immense murmur arises. The policemen move off, driving before them, to keep an open space, the mob of loiterers scattered over the course. A cry from all parts "Hats off!" Every eye is turned to one sole point. The signal is given. "They are off! They are off!"

I am not going to describe the various accidents of this memorable race, but there is one which my national vanity forbids me to pass over in silence. During one part of the race our compatriot *Royallien* figured among the foremost, and valiantly sustained the honour of France, when suddenly, O cruel fate! at one of the turnings *Atherstone*, another of the horses, knocked up against him, caused him to lose his stride, and threw him back upon *Dundee*, who was next behind. Was it in consequence of this misadventure that *Royallien* did not come in first? I dare not go so far as to say that, but there is no patriotic exaggeration in supposing that, without this accident, *Royallien* would not have been the sixth. The conqueror however, was—*Dundee*? No. *Diophantus*? No more than the other. The two favourites only came in after a horse, certainly very powerful and very handsome, but which had been quoted very low in the betting list. Such is the fortune of war!

Great was the astonishment when it was known that *Dundee* had not carried off the palm; but, when the first moment of stupor was over, the name of *Kettledrum* was in every mouth, and Colonel Townley, the owner of the horse, received congratulations all the more deserved that, although a new comer in the career of the turf, he has distinguished himself over all other breeders by the ardour and disinterestedness of his zeal for the improvement of the breed of horses. The fact is, that Colonel Townley has never staked any but trifling sums, mere profit not being his object. The most serious stake he has ever risked is that which *Kettledrum* has just won for him, and that does not exceed 2000*l.*, which the *habitues* of the turf regard as a pitiful sum.

A point worth noticing is, that this race occupied only two

minutes forty-five seconds, or two seconds less than the celebrated race of 1857. In this age of inventions, the object of which is to devour time and suppress space, horses, as you see, do not remain behindhand, but promise to become worthy rivals of steam.

Among the spectators of mark were the King of the Belgians, and the Count of Flanders, his second son; the Duc de Chartres, the Duke of Cambridge, &c. As for the Queen, who is very partial to the Ascot Races, she has long since, for reasons unknown to me, withdrawn her patronage from the Epsom Races, although these alone have a truly national character, and almost the importance of an institution.

Such is the history of this "day of days." But how incomplete would it be, were I not to write a few words on the return home! The going to Epsom is admirable; the coming back from it is amazing. A *descôte de la courtille Anglaise*, that is how I would define the return from Epsom if a definition were possible. Let those who believe the English to be a cold, grave, phlegmatic people, come and contemplate what passes at that moment upon the road, and to see which all those inquiring faces are, as it were, glued to the windows of the houses on either side. What exuberance of life! What thundering shouts of mirth! What prodigious unburdening of the mind! What aptitude to follow the most audacious inspirations of champagne, or "mild ale." You are shoved about, pointed at derisively, apostrophised, and, quite in a brotherly way, you have jests and turnips flung at your head. Everybody is absurd who is not in a brutish state. Everybody is charming who is not dead drunk.

Ah! I was about to forget what I ought to have said in the beginning of my letter. There is this worthy of remark in the Epsom Races, that they predispose all the world to benevolence, and that they open hearts as well as purses. On returning to my home I recalled to mind all the money I had seen given away to poor wretches, and I fell asleep with this reflection, that on that evening at least, many unfortunate creatures had the materials of a supper!

LETTER XII.

ADMIRATION OF THE ENGLISH FOR COUNT CAVOUR.

June 8th, 1861.

THE impression produced here by the death of Count Cavour has been immense—greater, I fancy, than in France, and, if possible, as great as in Italy. This death is the topic of every conversation, the converging point of all minds. The mourning of the English has assumed Biblical proportions: “A prince has fallen in Israel !”

And how comes it that Providence has permitted such a beacon to be extinguished in the midst of the obscurity which still enshrouds the destinies of Italy? *Quomodo cecidit vir potens?* Some speak of the deceased minister as “This man of men.” Some ask with alarm what the future has in store for Italy, now that his soul has fled to the regions of the unknown.

The day before yesterday the *Times* wrote: “There have been statesmen; there have been diplomatists; there have been great minds; there have been heroes; but it will be long before we again look upon a man who was all that at the same time, and more than that.” The House of Lords rendered to the memory of him who is no more, an homage indicative of a profound emotion, made yet more profound by the silly remark of the Marquis of Bath: “He violated every law, human and divine.”

Lastly, the Exchange, that supreme judge of nations and kings, the prophet whose oracles are more infallible than those of Calchas, the barometer that marks with such tragical precision the sort of weather that prevails in the hearts and minds of men—the Exchange in London fell considerably, saying as it were to all: “The death of this potent Italian is perhaps a shock given to the whole world.”

Is there not something strange in the violence of these transports, and in this immeasurable extent of admiration!

I am certainly one of those who bend with respect before the memory of the illustrious dead. The tact and ability with which he contrived to make the regeneration of his

country, even before the time had come, one of the most troublesome questions of European diplomacy, the place which he secured for the little kingdom of Sardinia on battle-fields and in congresses, the skill with which he made sure of the support of France without wounding the susceptibilities of England ; the opportuneness of the challenge he sent to Austria, and the provident firmness which enabled him to undermine the edifice of clerical despotism while waiting for the spark to fire the train—all that is worthy to be remembered, worthy to be admired. But all that is not sufficient to account for the deification of a man, especially in a country like England.

There must surely have been some other cause for this universal feeling than that which appeared on the surface, and it is on this point that I ask your permission to speak unreservedly—my duty to yourself and to your readers requiring of me to describe things, not as I could wish them to be, but exactly as they are, or at least as I see them, after an earnest and careful examination.

First of all, allow me to draw your attention to the following passage in the funeral oration over Count Cavour by the *Times*, which on solemn occasions and in questions of foreign policy is unquestionably the voice of England :—

“A work of the greatest difficulty and the greatest nobleness has been accomplished by the genius and audacity of a single man. Cavour held in his strong hand those famous Italian republics which were never united except to conquer Europe, or under the pressure of a world. Will the unity of Italy survive him who created it? Will Italy continue to exist, after having ceased to live in the conception of that powerful intelligence and of that energetic will? The policy which caused Sardinia to rise again out of her ashes, which made her the ally of Western Europe, which put her soldiers to the proof in the East, which brought the power of Austria to act as the aggressor, which obtained for Italy the gain of a province, which gave to every Italian the certitude of having a leader, which forced sovereigns to flee before popular demonstrations, and armies to melt away before a band of adventurers; that policy was the policy of Cavour. His was the head that conceived the plan, his the heart that communicated life to it, and his the arm that executed it.”

The rest is in the same tone, in the same spirit, and I could not place before your eyes a more faithful *r  sum  * of all that is published in the London papers, of all that is said in private society, to foreigners or in their presence.

Of the part played by France in the humiliation of Austria, the emancipation of Italy, and the loosening of the papal tyranny—of the prodigious impulse given to events by the initiative of France—of the unparalleled and generous eagerness of the French to offer their gold and their blood for the triumph of a cause that was theirs only because it was the cause of right; of Magenta, of Solferino, and of the immortal bond that unites those famous names to the memory of resuscitated Italy,—not one word.

Alone, Cavour did all; alone, he had the idea of an independent Italy; alone, he carried out that idea into action; alone, he accomplished the immense task; to him alone Italy was indebted for her revival.

Now, mark: nothing is said, any more than if it had never existed, of that democratic movement which, for so many years past, has never ceased to keep alive in Italy a flame that seemed always on the point of expiring! It is forgotten that the *conception* of a free and independent Italy is the common property of a crowd of heroic men, whose gravestones are to be seen at every halting-place of Italy on the march, and whose efforts are traced along that fateful road by a long track of blood! Garibaldi himself seems for the present to be erased from the list of liberators. If Sicily has been conquered, if Naples is no more than a gem of Victor Emmanuel's crown, if armies have fled before a band of *adventurers*, the glory is ascribed, not to Garibaldi, but to the genius that inspired the Councils of Turin! The diplomatist has slain the warrior!

I candidly confess that in this affectation of representing the Italian Minister as the *sole* creator of the independence of Italy I strongly suspect there is less real enthusiasm for him than jealousy with regard to France. Nations as well as individuals have a singular aptitude for self-deception touching the nature of their motives. Not unfrequently they obey moral laws the true sense of which they do not admit even to themselves, while instinct, which acts as such a subtle substitute for calculation, rules them at the same time that it leads them astray.

The present, I am disposed to believe, is a case in point. The boundless admiration professed by the English for Cavour is less ingenuous than it at first appears, less so, perhaps, than they themselves for the most part imagine. It does not need a very searching analysis to separate from the exaggerations I have pointed out a remnant of the old leaven of national jealousies, and an instinctive desire to cast into the shade the debt which Italy, restored to herself, owes to France. What better means, indeed, for attaining this end than to put conspicuously forward an idol on which shall be concentrated the eyes of the world, and towards which the gratitude of the Italians shall be exclusively directed?

There was a time when this idol was Garibaldi, who, independently of his qualities as a man, a citizen, and a soldier, possessed in the eyes of the English the merit of having, from the first, proposed himself as the representative of the idea that "Italy should demand her deliverance from Italy alone"—*Italia fara da se*. Accordingly, what enthusiasm did he not excite! Single-handed, he had done all. It was he who was the great liberator,—it was in his honour that incense was offered on every shrine in England. But that could last only for a time.

Was it possible for England, who has little love for any revolutions except those of which she herself has furnished the model and the framework, to remain to the end faithful to the fortunes of a man surrounded by democrats of all countries, and holding diplomatic strategy in contempt; of a man who had conquered and who desired to continue to conquer by the impulse of the masses, by means of miracles arising out of the spontaneous action of the people; and who showed himself ever ready to follow the straight road before him, as inaccessible to the fear of the unforeseen as to that of an enemy.

To become the favoured hero of constitutional, commercial England, fond as she is of conventional ideas and traditional modes of proceeding, Count Cavour possessed qualities in which his glorious rival was evidently deficient. Besides—and this was decisive—he was looked upon as a man likely to hold French diplomacy in check, to frustrate its designs or, as some think, to use it for his own purposes, if it showed any symptoms of wishing to encroach.

I have already had occasion to tell you how keen are my sympathies for England, where the reign of freedom of thought wears such an imposing aspect. It was not therefore without sorrow that I decided on communicating to you the result of my observations on the melancholy circumstance which gave rise to them. But I thought it my duty to speak out.

It is of consequence that it should be known in France how interested people are, beyond her borders, to give credence to the idea that Italy owes her nothing. It is of consequence that the French Government should be made thoroughly aware that in appearing to shuffle in the Italian question, that in leaving a garrison in Rome, that in hesitating to proclaim its adhesion to the establishment of the new kingdom, it runs the risk of veiling the splendour radiating from our armed intervention in favour of Italy, and of serving, against its own wishes, the policy of those who are disquieted by the progress of our moral influence and are jealous of our glory.

As for the direction that should be given to the legitimate regret caused by the death of Count Cavour, I am glad that my own views agree with those which you yourself have expressed. Like you, I am of opinion that with the solemnity of these regrets should not be mingled any feeling of pusillanimous discouragement. Like you, I believe that the noblest manner in which the Italians can honour the memory of the minister they have lost, is by showing that they can do without him, and that it is in the self-consciousness which Italy has acquired that the surest guarantee of Italian unity is to be looked for.

This appreciation of the event, given by *Le Temps*, is the only one that is philosophical, the only one at all commensurate with the grandeur of the cause that is at stake, in fact, the only one that is true. It is not given to any man to carry the destinies of a nation in the hollow of his hand. Potent individuals, doubtless, play their part in accelerating the movement which carries all before it; but it is right not to exaggerate the influence they exercise.

Historical personages—and I allude to the most illustrious—are, after all, nothing more than ephemeral actors in a drama composed, without their knowledge, by the society

in which they live and move and have their being. Often-times they do no more than follow what they are supposed to have the power of guiding. Their influence, nearly always a borrowed one, arises from circumstances which not only they did not create, but which are the fruit of a slow and invisible gestation, the secret of which is unknown to themselves. The strength which they exert, their contemporaries and they, too, imagine that they derive it from themselves, whereas it usually comes to them from the medium in which they exist. They merely represent what it is supposed they produce or possess. To deceive oneself in this, is like taking the image seen in a mirror for the object whose image is reflected in that mirror! It is a very natural error, it is true. Minds that are dim-sighted, or lazy, find it so convenient to attribute to a cause which lives, and speaks, and moves, which may be interrogated and will answer, effects the real cause of which is multifold, complex, and lost in the depths of history! Great situations, besides, have such a halo around them, and the vulgar are so ready to measure the elevation of the statue by that of its pedestal!

But it is precisely because this tendency is so natural and common, that it becomes the duty of earnest minds to combat it, in the name and for the sake of the dignity of human nature. For it is impossible to represent certain individuals as too great without mankind appearing stunted and—becoming so. Woe to the nations that are accustomed by the directors of public opinion to hold, in thought, their life of that of a single individual, however remarkable he may be! Such a conviction, if general, finishes by creating a thick, heavy atmosphere, in which characters become lowered, the edge of the sword becomes blunted, and in which air is wanting for manly virtues.

Let us not say, then, to the Italians, that the soul of Italian unity has flown aloft. Let us not say to them that their independence henceforth is but a lamp the flame of which is flickering over a tomb. Let us not express any degrading doubts as to the future of a nation which has so forcibly demonstrated its aptitude to become a nation.* Let us not offer to those twenty-six millions of citizens before whom a new life has opened out, the insult of trembling for them because there is one of them the less in the world. Let us rather say—“*Cavour est mort, vive l'Italie!*”

LETTER XIII.

A "STRIKE" IN ENGLAND.

June 19th, 1861.

It is no longer of the Epsom races, or of those of Ascot, that I am about to speak to-day. At this very moment, though no stormy blast ruffles the surface of English society, something of a terrible nature is bestirring itself in the depths thereof. In thousands of families the mother measures with an anxious eye the quantity of bread that remains for her children, while the father, his arms crossed upon his chest, with fixed stare and gloomy countenance, mutters the words : "No, no, we'll not give in. We'll die first!"

In 1854 a social tragedy which occupied no less than thirty-six mortal weeks, was played out at Preston. The operatives employed in the manufactories, deeming themselves insufficiently paid, held a meeting on the 1st of June, as the result of which they demanded an augmentation of their wages to the extent of ten per cent. This demand having been rejected by their employers, the workmen entered into a coalition. Staying themselves on that organization of Trades Unions which is so powerful in England, and which day by day tends to become still more so—guided in their action by a committee of energetic, impassioned men, and sure of having at their disposal a sort of war budget, formed by the contributions of other workmen, they purposed resolutely to face the formidable chances of a strike. On their side, opposing coalition to coalition, the masters declared that if the men did not withdraw their demand, all their establishments should be closed at once on a certain fixed day. The fatal day expired. The works were suspended. The state of things having lasted, as I have already observed, for thirty-six weeks, you may imagine what a fearful breach was made into the capital employed in this particular branch of industry. As for the sufferings endured by the workmen, a simple calculation will reckon them up. During the whole of this period 17,000 operatives, who had been accustomed to earn twenty shillings a week, received only four, proceeding from the system of

brotherly contributions, the total of which, nevertheless, amounted to the enormous sum of £96,000 sterling. At last, after a struggle, calm but terrible, and of a funereal grandeur, the operatives were forced to give in. This desperate attempt had caused the entire population a loss valued at £250,000 sterling!

From this you may judge of the dimensions of a strike in this country!

Well, a repetition of the great tragedy of Preston is now rehearsing for London. And this time it is the important "corporation" of masons that figures on the field of battle. I use the expression, "the field of battle," for it is, alas! only too just. Does not bankruptcy have its victims as well as cannon? Does not hunger kill as well as the sword?

I will tell you the story of this new disaster.

Two years ago the workmen employed by the builders demanded that a day's labour should be reduced from ten to nine hours, but without a proportionate diminution of wages. This was called the "Nine Hours' Movement." Its principal object, was to furnish employment to a number of workmen who happened then to be unemployed. It was, of course, quite evident that if those who were regularly employed did no more than nine-tenths of the work that had to be done, the remaining tenth part would have to be confided to a certain number of additional hands. Moreover, the mere reduction of the hours of labour amounted in fact to an increase of wages. On what foundation did this exigency rest? In order to make it legitimate, the men rested their claim on this, that for some years past the profits in the building trade having very largely increased, it was only fair that those should participate in the fruits of this prosperity through whom it had been brought about. The masters replied by a refusal. They went further. They announced their resolution of closing their yards for the future against every workman who refused to sign a certain "document," which imposed upon its subscribers engagements calculated to withdraw them from the laws of the Trades Unions, and consequently to burst the bond by which the different members of the great family of artisans are bound together. Equal obstinacy was displayed on both sides. A certain degree of heat was engendered. Bitter words were

exchanged. The public sighed over the suspension of works of a pressing nature. An abyss gradually opened out, in which immense sums were engulfed and disappeared. For the men it was a time of hard privations and anguish, which they bore with a gloomy courage, until, exhausted by the struggle, they consented to allow their demand to fall to the ground, provided the masters, on their side, withdrew the famous "document,"—in the eyes of the one party an act of self-preservation, in those of the other an act of tyranny. The "document" being put aside, work was resumed, each party proclaiming itself the victor.

It is certain, however, that so far as the origin of the dispute was concerned, the workmen were vanquished. But so little were they discouraged, that this present year the Nine Hours' Movement has recommenced with redoubled passion and unexpected heat. In this emergency how did the contractors act? In the hope of putting an end, once for all, to agitations respecting the length of a day's labour, they have proposed a new system consisting in payment by the hour, instead of payment by the day, so that every workman would be at liberty to work just so long as he pleased, receiving his pay accordingly.

At first sight, one would suppose that the men would have adopted this system with alacrity. Well, just the contrary has happened. In the mode proposed, which makes the limitation of the time consecrated to labour a matter of private arrangement between each individual workman and the contractor, the masons see only a skilful attempt to destroy or counteract the power of the Trades Unions; to detach the labourers, one by one, from the common cause; in a word, to rob them imperceptibly of the strength they derive from an organization which, in certain given circumstances, enables them to act collectively as one man.

However, it seemed for one moment as if the proposed new system would triumph, if not completely, at least partially, thanks to a concession designed to make it more attractive, that is, the gratuitous concession of a half-holiday on Saturday.

The fact is, that during the last week but one, the contractors fancied themselves sure of the victory. The new system appeared to have taken so well, that in three of the

establishments where it had been adopted, the number of workmen was complete. The works in the Horticultural Gardens were pushed forward with activity; the construction of the palace intended for the forthcoming exhibition of objects of industry, advanced with all desirable rapidity; the principle of payment by the hour was in full application in several of the principal establishments of London; to sum it up, the *Times*, which from the beginning had stood by the contractors, suddenly announced to its readers, in the style of an imperial bulletin, that the battle was three parts won; that the workmen had come to understand their true interests; that the domination of the Trades Unions was approaching its downfall; that if the plasterers still held out, if the plumbers did the same, if the carpenters preserved a menacing neutrality, there was no occasion to be disquieted about these sinister indications; in a few days all would be settled!

These haughty assurances have received a cruel contradiction. At the very moment when those whose optimism had been cradled in such fair promises, were bidding adieu to all harassing misgivings, the most important and most numerous body of workmen in London, the masons, received from their governing committee the formal order to strike.

What will be the result of this agitation? What is the bearing of it? To what general causes should it be referred? Of what disease is it the symptom? Is there a remedy for it, and where is the remedy to be sought? Grave questions these, the solution of which calls for a profound examination of the fundamental ideas on which is erected the edifice of English society; of the tendencies which constitute the strength of England, but which at the same time comprise her weak points, and of the social principles of which she is the representative in the eyes of the world!

With your permission, I will attempt this examination in a future letter.

To pour forth lamentations on the frequency of strikes; to repeat for the thousandth time—what no man of common sense ever disputes—that they are sometimes more fatal to the workmen than to their masters; to reckon up the evils they engender, and the amount of capital they devour; to thunder against the agitators to whom they are attributed, through not understanding their profound and melancholy significa-

tion ; to explain to the labourer, in a doctoral manner, how it becomes him to submit with a good grace to the scientific relation that exists between supply and demand, and that if he happens to be a-hungered according to rule and regulation, it is all for the best ;—to do this may appear sufficient to cold sophists and vain declaimers. But for society, which does not mean this or that class, which is the total of all classes bound one to another by a oneness of interests ready to burst forth into evil when prevented from bursting forth into good ; for society, it is of paramount importance that questions of such a lofty order should be studied, when the opportunity offers, with an impartial spirit, a sustained attention, and an indomitable desire to do justice to all.

LETTER XIV.

SENSATIONAL AMUSEMENTS.

June 25th, 1861.

It has been given to Blondin to make for himself an important place in the domain of popular emotions. This man—is that, in truth, the right word? I know not, indeed, how that may be ! To see him stand upright, sit down, walk, or to hear him speak, &c., &c., there is nothing, assuredly, to indicate that he belongs to a different species from you or myself—in fact, to any other class of beings than that which the Grecian philosopher, so cleverly refuted by Diogenes, defined as “an animal with two legs and without feathers.” But this much is sure, that to all the attributes of a thinking animal, he joins those of the most agile ape that creation ever produced. You should see him run with the fleetness of Hippomenes—to employ a more noble comparison—on a rope 500 feet in length, stretched 200 feet above the ground, and with his head enveloped in a sack, which makes day as dark as night to him ! You should see him suspend himself inverted, his head below, his feet in the air, his arms extended ! The other

day at the Crystal Palace did he not advance along the tight-rope, loaded with an enormous cooking apparatus, and did he not seat himself upon this rope—at a height of 150 feet, remember—to make an omelette, an operation which he successfully achieved, after going through all the necessary preliminaries? And can you fancy a man capable of taking a leap head over heels upon the rope, with an abyss yawning beneath him, and upon stilts? What a prodigy of mathematical precision must it be that saves him from death, when between death and himself there is less than the thickness of a hair? It is a mystery!

The success he has met with in England, you may guess. Expressed in figures, it comes to this: Blondin has been engaged for twelve representations at the Crystal Palace, the shareholders of which deem that they have made an excellent bargain in offering him for his services only £1200. Quite recently at Bradford, two exhibitions of his gymnastic feats brought him £250. Judge of the rest!

A singular dispute arose at Bradford between himself and the Park Committee that had engaged him. The committee, from financial motives quite unobjectionable and very intelligible, having no desire that people should enjoy the spectacle without paying for the privilege, placed the rope at an elevation calculated upon the height of the surrounding walls. Blondin arrives. How shall I describe his indignation at the sight of a rope barely one hundred feet from the ground! They had all the trouble in the world to console him. And yet there could be no doubt that a height of a hundred feet was quite as much as he could reasonably demand for an opportunity to break his neck.

A report had gone abroad that Blondin had offered £100 to anyone who would allow himself to be carried by him on his promenades on the rope. The rumour was unfounded. What is true, and it was told by himself to one of my friends, is that one fine day he received a letter couched in these terms: "Sir, I am informed that you offer £100 to anyone who will let himself be carried in your arms. I am at your disposal, and shall be content even with £50, on the condition that if, by any impossibility, you should happen to make a mistake, the amount shall be remitted to my mother." At Bradford, I am assured that a "gentleman" offered himself

for nothing, out of pure love for the art! This may be added, if true, to the chapter of English eccentricities.

An amusing fact may be mentioned in this place.

At the time of the Crimean war, and later, during the campaign in Italy, when nothing was talked of in Europe but the exploits of our Zouaves, numbers of English people stoutly maintained that the Zouaves were *Arabs*. The same sentiment now impels numbers of Englishmen to pretend that Blondin is a *Canadian*. It is all very well for him to be of St. Omer—it is all very well that he has nothing whatever to do with Canada beyond having travelled in it. I know many Englishmen who would refuse Blondin the privilege of belonging to his own country, unless they were shown the register of his birth. And even then, I am not quite certain they would give in.

To complete the details, I ought to bring before you the incomparable acrobat pushing before him, on a tight rope, his own daughter, seated in a wheelbarrow; and the child—for she is only a child—raining down upon the public, from the height of her moveable throne, a shower of flowers, sprinkled on this side and on that with a graceful carelessness that makes the hair stand on end, and the mother seated there in front, witnessing the fearful spectacle with an air of perfect confidence; and the House of Commons exclaiming at last: “Ah! this is carrying it too far!” But this circumstance you have yourself already mentioned, and it has called forth a brief commentary from your pen, to which I give my cordial assent. I will say more: it seems to me perfectly wrong to allow a man to make a public profession of playing with death, for the amusement of idlers, men about town, and frivolous women who require strong sensations. It is a horrible education to give to the public, that of ferocious entertainments. I admit that it is very interesting to see to what a degree the physical organization of a man’s body is marvellous, nor is it less so to be able to judge of the boundless power of habit, which one is accustomed to call “a second nature,” though it would be more correct to say “it is the first.” Unfortunately, that is not the true source of the interest which attaches to this kind of spectacle. The danger incurred by the performer is what constitutes for the majority of spectators the real

attraction. Were it otherwise, what necessity would there be for placing the rope 200 feet from the ground? What becomes, with exhibitions of this sort, of that respect for human life which is one of the essential virtues of civilised man? There is at this moment another of our fellow-countrymen, named Leotard, whose gymnastic exercises are a marvel; but he enchants you without making you shudder. You can admire his prodigious suppleness without turning pale. Alas! I much fear that for that very reason Leotard will be less run after than Blondin.

Unhappily, the taste of the English for violent exhibitions is one of the stains on their national character. I shall never in all my life forget one evening when passing through Leicester Square, I saw the place covered with a crowd, the general expression of which portrayed an indescribable emotion. People spoke to one another with an animated air, and with menacing gesticulation, while the glare of triumph and defiance shone from every eye. I trembled, lest some alarming intelligence had arrived from the Continent. Good heavens! could war have been declared between France and England! With what astonishment was I seized on being informed that the cause of this popular trepidation was the result, at last known, of a boxing match between the English pugilist Sayers and the American pugilist Heenan. Heenan had crossed the ocean to uphold, with fisticuffs, the honour of his country, against Tom Sayers, the personification of the honour of his own native land. And the result was that, although Sayers was to Heenan what David was to Goliath, Sayers, after having lost at the commencement of the combat the use of one of his arms, remained, if not the conqueror, at least unconquered. It is true that Heenan was at the point of strangling him by squeezing his neck against the rope stretched round the ring; but, on the other hand, Heenan left the field of battle in a state of complete blindness. Thus the honour of England was saved!

And the number of spectators? Immense. There were there, pell-mell with the offscourings of public-houses and places of low resort, lords, members of the Upper House, members of the Lower House, and—would you believe it?—clergymen. But boxing is forbidden by the laws? Agreed; and what does that signify, where public opinion is on this

point a thousand times stronger than the laws, which are readily violated, in such instances as these, by those even who made them? The police of course never by any chance arrive until it is too late.

And this is precisely what happened during the present week, on the occasion of another prize-fight. One of the two champions was a little fellow, comparatively feeble, but frightfully skilful and active. The other was a giant of a build to make one tremble. The giant, whose name is Hurst, was vanquished. In other words, he was carried out of the ring with the blood streaming from him, his face no longer the face of a man, and all unconscious. The victor is named Mace—a name not to be forgotten by posterity. Now, if the Liverpool citizens are at all logical, let us hope that they will invite Mace to pay them a visit, and will offer him the same reception that they did to Sayers. When the latter repaired to Liverpool, did they not go forth to meet him with the sound of instruments, and with the full display of official pomp? Did not the women line the windows? Was not the path of the great man strewed with flowers? But no: Hurst not being an American, Mace, unlike Sayers, has not saved the honour of England!

LETTER XV.

THE BATTLE-FIELD OF LABOUR.

July 1st, 1861.

IN my last letter but one I touched upon the important subject of strikes, and spoke of the excitement created by that in the building trade. There is nothing in this excitement to affect the eyes or the ears. Here and there unfinished houses, deserted scaffoldings, a few articles occasionally printed in small type in journals of greater or less circulation—this is all that appears upon the surface. Everyone goes as usual after his business or his pleasure. Everyone for himself, and God for all.

As for the workmen on strike, it is worthy of remark that they never think here of troubling the public tranquillity. Nothing hitherto has seemed further from their thoughts than the idea of an insurrection. When they suffer, they do so in silence. The explosion of their grief, and even of their indignation, bursts forth and dies away within the inclosure of their meetings. Starting from the point of view that the affair should be settled between themselves and their employers, they act accordingly.

England is, I fancy, the only country in the world where a spectacle could be witnessed, so admirable and yet so heart-rending, as that presented in 1854, by the great strike of the Preston operatives. Fancy 17,000 men, fathers and husbands, resisting, throughout a most severe winter, all the temptations of despair! They might be seen, at the hours fixed for the discussion of their interests, pouring into vast fields like a living sea, without order being imperilled, without any act of violence being committed, without this solemn protest against the caprices of fate and the tyranny of circumstances losing for a single moment the character of serenity that ennobles suffering, and causes justice, ever august in itself, to appear still more so.

Truth, however, compels me to acknowledge that in the minds of the English workmen, coalitions are generally allied to a practice which injures their cause because it lowers its tone. You are aware that in an army a certain number of horse or foot soldiers ever ready to march at the word of command, are called *piquets*. Well, workmen in England associated together for a strike, have their *piquets* also, whose mission it is to roam about in the vicinity of places where works are in progress that have been visited with an interdict, and to take care that this interdict has its full effect. The consequence is, that those who are surprised at work, after the suspension of all labour has been decided, run some risk of being insulted or ill-treated. Sad disturbances, which, although partial, are to be regretted, because the detractors of the people, after having exaggerated them beyond all bounds, take advantage of them to cry aloud that individual liberty has been violated, and that oppression is employed! Such is the sentiment of antagonism nourished by the opposition of interests, that the workmen belonging to the same branch of industry, when

they coalesce against the contractors, regard themselves as an army, and fancy themselves entitled to apply to those of their class who separate themselves from the common cause, the principle which, in an army, authorises the violation of the individual liberty of deserters. Be that as it may, as these acts of violence are, after all, rare and accidental; as they take place only under the empire of exceptional circumstances, and in a sphere of seemingly private interests, they are not thought sufficient to induce the English public, or the government by which it is represented, to abandon its rule of abstaining from all interference in the matter of strikes. People watch the different phases of the struggle, inquire on which side is the wrong, declare themselves, so far as words go, for one party or the other, and treat the affair as a tournament, in which the public is judge of the lists, but nothing more.

In vain do the strikes return periodically to warn public opinion that there is something more serious to be fathomed. In vain do thoughtful minds remark with anxiety that these crises become more and more frequent. It seems to be deemed preferable to endure the evil than to seek for a remedy.

Nay more, there are certain optimists who go so far as to pretend that strikes, after all, have their good points, which should console us a little for the calamities to which they give rise. Do they not denote in the workman proud aspirations? Do they not prove his aptitude to coalesce with his fellows? Do they not show him forth penetrated by the sentiment of his dignity as a man? In asking him to suffer for a cause which is that of his fellow-labourers as much as his own; in moving him to sacrifice the temptations of the present hour to the acquisition of a better future, his actual welfare to the eventual elevation of his class-fellows, and the pride of his individual judgment to the necessity of acting in common—do they not break him into the hard but strengthening discipline of devotedness?

All this, for my part, I am ready to admit. But it must also be admitted that these strikes are an appeal to the popular Nemesis; that they inspire a terrible gloom and foster class animosities; that they decorate with the fine

name of right and the still finer name of duty, that which is sometimes only a blind and revengeful obstinacy; that they accustom the poor to harden themselves with a savage stoicism against the sufferings revealed not only by their own sleepless nights, but by the tears of their children and the pale cheeks of the mother; lastly, that they develop qualities which belong to war, not to peace.

And in the hope of what?

If there is one fact certain in this world, it is that, in nearly every case, strikes terminate in a result contrary to their object. In England, in a period of 25 years, from 1836 to 1861, it would be hard to cite the examples of six large strikes that have succeeded. The one at Preston in 1854 was a model of organisation, and had immense resources at its disposal: but what did it produce? I have already told you. Alas! it is simple enough. In a struggle of this kind, in which victory falls to him who can *wait* the longest, how can it be otherwise than that he who loses in it only a portion of his profits should possess a decisive advantage over him who loses in it a portion of his daily bread? Thus it generally happens that, after making sacrifices which exhaust him, the workman finds himself at the end of the matter obliged to submit, and to resume his burden on conditions still more unfavourable than before, because the very losses inflicted on the masters have diminished that portion of the national wealth which is set apart for the remuneration of labour. They have been killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Besides, the idea of a strike implies a really very imperfect knowledge of the laws which, under the empire of the system of competition, govern the industrial world. This system tends to establish among the profits emanating from different callings, a level above which it becomes impossible for the profits of any particular branch of industry to be long maintained. If, for example, the profit arising from the construction of dwelling-houses sensibly exceeds that derived from any other pursuit, the temptation of greater gain will not fail to bring into that department of human activity fresh capitalists, whose competition will naturally lower the value of the capital already employed. In the same manner, if the returns be less than elsewhere, capital

will tend to withdraw from it, and the competitors who persist in it, being now less numerous, will gain more, which will again raise the level.

What do the workmen do, then, when in a branch of industry in which no temporary cause has contributed to call forth an increase of profits, they insist upon an augmentation of their wages? They go against an inflexible law. They ask for a thing which their employers will either be forced to refuse them, or which, if it be ceded to them, will drive away capital from an investment to which the same advantages do not attach that are presented in others, and will consequently diminish the funds on which is based the remuneration of their labour.

It is true—though teachers of political economy too often forget the fact—that the effect of competition upon the equalisation of profits does not make itself felt from one day to the next, with mathematical precision, without delay, without transition. Temporary circumstances may, in this or in that branch of industry, create exceptionally high profits, and before the average is lowered by the advent of fresh capitalists impatient to share them, a considerable time may elapse. In such a case there is no doubt that the workmen, by means of a well-sustained strike, may succeed in bringing their employers to give them a fair proportion of the surplus resulting from the especially favourable circumstances in question. But it is clear that this implies a very exact and delicate appreciation of the situation, any mistake about which would be fatal to them. And even supposing that they fall into no error, it may be doubted if the purely temporary fruits of their victory are worth the trials and sufferings they have to encounter in the struggle.

Strikes, then, are an evil, generally speaking. They do more harm to those who have recourse to them, than to those against whom they are directed. For society at large they are a source of ruin and affliction.

This being so, what is to be done?

Scold the people? Reproach them with their ignorance? Advise them to attend a course of lectures on political economy, and apply them to a serious examination of the law of supply and demand? Assuredly, if that were enough, the question would have been settled long ago; for, thank

goodness! there has never been any want of sermonising. Unfortunately, to make the advice that has been bestowed at all efficacious, the givers of it ought to have pointed out to the people a means of ameliorating their condition when it became onerous, and of protecting their interests when menaced. This is precisely what has always been left out of sight.

All this time the evil grows worse. Blind appeals to the *vis inertiae* become multiplied. The workmen persist in what may be called the war of folded arms, and strange words begin to be heard. How can I tell you, without sorrow, that in this Nine Hours' Movement the bricklayers have been warned that, if they persisted, foreign workmen might possibly be brought over into England and installed in the place of fellow-countrymen who refused to give in, and whose arms would thus, as it were, be broken? To this menace the bricklayers do not seem to have paid much heed, but if, perchance, it were serious and were actually executed, is it so certain that the newcomers, once they were in possession of the domain of their predecessors, would never be induced to imitate their example? Or is it so certain that all those poor creatures who were thus reduced to despair would patiently resign themselves to the worst? If not, what would happen?

As to forbidding by law the coalitions either of workmen or of masters, England could not attempt it, without giving a formal contradiction to the spirit of her institutions, without abdicating all her political and economical creeds.

LETTER XVI.

THE LIBERTY OF COALITIONS.

July 7th, 1861.

THE great struggle of the journeymen bricklayers in London against the contractors is an epic which merits, alas! being followed with an anxious mind through its different

phases. What history can be narrated that should possess for thoughtful minds a more moving interest, or be more fruitful of instruction? The domain of labour transformed into a field of battle! What subject can be imagined that lies more closely to the very root of modern societies?

In two previous letters I have related how the workmen employed in the building trade in London demanded that a day's work should be reduced from ten to nine hours, without a proportionate diminution of wages, and how the contractors, not content with rejecting this demand, made a counter-proposition with a view to put an end, once for all, to every kind of agitation touching the length of a day's labour. The new system offered by the contractors consists, as I have already explained, in paying by the hour instead of paying by the day.

Hence the formation of two hostile camps, a strike of the workmen, the stagnation of labour, and all the loss, all the sufferings, which such a situation naturally implies.

The denouement has not yet arrived, but this is how things stand at the present moment:—

On the 22nd of last month the bricklayers of London and its suburbs held a meeting, at which they resolved to submit the dispute, with the assent of the contractors, to the arbitration of the Council of the Institution of British Architects, in order to come to a compromise founded on an impartial examination of the question at issue.

A memorial expressing this wish was in consequence addressed by the workmen to the Council of the Institute.

Unhappily, the contractors declined all friendly interference, whether through the influence of a feeling of irritation, or because they reckoned for their coming triumph upon the spirit of division, the germ of which they imagined they discerned among the workmen; and on the very next day they determined, on their part, at a meeting in which the principal establishments were represented, that from the 1st of July the system of payment by the hour should be adopted by all the contractors as a final regulation.

On Monday last the fatal delay expired; and, as you may imagine, it was a day looked forward to with anxiety not only by the men engaged in the building trade, but by the entire body of working men.

If I am rightly informed, the number of establishments that put into execution the resolution taken at the meeting of the 23rd June does not exceed twenty-one, but they happen to be the most important of all.

The result thus far is, that, with a very few exceptions, the bricklayers have abandoned their occupation.

At the same time their Committee have published a manifesto, in which they say, "We have arrived at the critical moment of the struggle. We must conquer, or resign ourselves to be conquered." You will remember Nelson's famous signal at Trafalgar: "England expects that every man will do his duty." The Bricklayers' Committee speak in the same spirit to those whom they direct: "Let every man do his duty, and in a fortnight we shall have triumphed." So much does this struggle resemble a battle!

Certain it is, that of 1000 members who compose the Stonemasons' Union in London, there are 700 on strike, while among the Associated Bricklayers, whose numbers amount to 1800, not more than 150 have submitted to the system of payment by the hour; 130 are working under a compromise; 700 are on strike; and the rest are employed on the old terms.

As for the carpenters, whose occupation is bound up with the building trade, they form, as it were, the reserve of the army in the field. They have consented, under protest, to accept the system of payment by the hour: but that does not prevent them from supporting the movement of their comrades, in whose favour each of them sets aside a shilling a week out of his earnings.

So matters stand. How will the knot be untied? The public looks on, with its arms folded like the masons, and the Government abstains from intervention.

The other day, in the House of Commons, Mr. Ayrton moved the second reading of a Bill having for its object the formation of a TRIBUNAL OF CONCILIATION, similar to what is called in France *Le Conseil des prud'hommes*. Nothing would seem more imperiously demanded by the circumstances. But, would you believe it, such a sensible motion was barely allowed the honours of a debate? The Bill was opposed by the Secretary of State and by the Solicitor-General, and thrown out without any further ceremony, Mr. Hardy, one of the

Members, having first declared in a peremptory manner that, so far as the workmen were concerned, it was best to leave the care of providing for them to the principle of supply and demand.

Be not surprised overmuch at society standing thus aloof in presence of a fact so serious and so tragical, and which is so closely connected with the welfare and security of all.

That which with our French ideas we might take for a blind indifference, is at once explained by the almost religious reverence for the liberty of the subject, which is the pivot of English society. That is the great side of the question.

But there is another explanation of the phenomenon which I have noted; and this one, being purely economical, leaves a wide opening for grave objections.

In England labour is regarded simply as merchandize, and as such is submitted to the same laws that regulate, for example, the sale of a hat or of a pair of boots.

At the time of the strike at Preston, the best accredited organ of political economy, as it is understood on this side of the Channel, gave the following definition of a strike; it is characteristic:—"A strike is in itself a very simple transaction. You see a table at a broker's. It takes your fancy, and you ask the price. If you think it too high, you leave the coveted object there, and you walk out of the shop. Let us suppose that you offer a pound less, and that the broker civilly refuses it—that is a strike. You strike against him, and he strikes against you. With this, fine reasonings, eloquent tirades, and mutual invective, have really nothing to do. You do not undertake to prove compendiously to the broker that his demand is unjust. You do not appeal to his sentiments in favour of your family, whose comfort requires a pretty table at a low price. You do not say to the refractory broker that he is a man without bowels, and that he is wrong to keep for his own use handsome furniture which he procures at the expense of his customers. No: you walk out; you forget the broker, and he forgets you. You asked for what suited you; he did the same on his side. You did not happen to agree. And then, is not every one the best judge of what concerns himself? This being premised, in what, I pray, do the relations of the workman with his employer differ from those of the broker with his customers?"

Such is the point of view generally adopted, and if you add to this, that according to the received notion, what is free for one to do, is free to be done by two, twenty, a thousand, twenty thousand,—the English regarding in the fact of association as an application of the liberty of the subject—you will have no difficulty in guessing at the conclusion to which these premises' conduct. Since labour is simply a merchandize, which tho one party can associate together to sell and the other to purchase, the coalitions of workmen are quite legitimate; quite legitimate also are the counter-coalitions of masters, and outside of the parties interested it is nobody's business. Such is the English theory. And the practice would correspond from point to point, were it not for the harsh censures fulminated on these occasions by the different organs of public opinion—by these against the workmen, by those against the employers; each following his own predilections and his own manner of appreciating the circumstances of the conflict.

This, you see, is a contradiction; for if it be true that the relations between the workman and the employer do not differ in any sort from those which exist between buyer and seller, why should those who are strangers to the parties, or who look upon themselves in that light, interfere in the dispute, whether by way of criticism, or counsel, or abuse? Do the organs of public opinion ever arrogate to themselves the right of lecturing or denouncing the broker for asking too much, or his customer for offering too little?

Logic would require that the public should abdicate even its rôle of steward of the lists in presence of one of those disputes which transform the two great agencies of production into two hostile armies—in presence of one of those terrible disputes which result, as at Preston, in famishing 17,000 fathers of families, their wives, and their children; in driving the contractors to bankruptcy; in impoverishing the poor; and, what is far more dreadful, in sowing in the hearts of fellow-citizens those collective hatreds whence, on a given day, spring social or servile wars! Yes, logic would demand that the public, by its organs, should no more meddle with this affair than with the purchase of a coat, or the sale of a pair of boots!

Need I point out to you the errors and the dangers of such a doctrine?

The workman sells his labour, granted ; but is there nothing in this sale to distinguish it from that of a table or a toy ? What does the workman sell in disposing of his labour, if it be not his whole time, his entire faculties, his person, his life ? Is it an inert article, this workman and his soul ? Is that an ordinary bargain from which may proceed, if it be not concluded, a sentence of death ?

And under how many other relations does this bargain differ from those to which it has been so strangely likened !

Between the man who offers a table for sale and the man who wishes to buy it, there exists no bond of union resulting from an association of resources and efforts. If they do not agree, there is no reason why either the one or the other should think himself injured—the one will patiently wait until another purchaser presents himself ; while the other, without complaining, will seek another seller, or will for the moment do without the desired object. In the relations of contractor and workman, on the contrary, there enters an element of permanence and association which impresses upon them an altogether distinctive character. They are united to produce, and it is this very circumstance which at times renders their position so full of *animus*, and causes their mutual relations to degenerate into antagonism, when the question arises to determine what proportion of the work produced should go to capital in the shape of profits, and what to labour in the shape of wages.

And, unfortunately, in this case it cannot be expected of the two contracting parties that they should judge after the same rules the question that divides them. It is, in fact, natural that the contractor, as such, should behold in manual labour only a means of accomplishing, with the aid of man, what he cannot accomplish with the aid of animals or machinery. But it is still far more natural that the workman should behold in manual labour the application of the strength and faculties of a being who thinks, feels, loves ; who has self-respect, wants, desires ; who is a husband and a father.

For the contractor, the importance of the remuneration to be given to labour depends upon the inflexible law of supply and demand, and under the empire of the principle of competition, it cannot depend upon anything else. But in virtue of a law more imperious than all those which attach to such

or such social arrangements, the workman is irresistibly impelled to compare the rate of his remuneration with the general price of the necessaries of life.

The contractor, in the existing order of things, is perfectly entitled to say: "Labour has, no more than any other saleable article, a fixed value; its value depends upon the profit that springs from it; to me labour can only be worth what it returns to me." But, on the other hand, the workman is not less entitled to reply; "There is a limit set by nature to the fluctuations of supply and demand; it is that below which labour would cease, because the labourer would die of hunger. If, for others, labour is the offering for sale of an article of commerce; for us labourers, it is the offering for sale of a human being."

Hence so many and such sad conflicts.

It is, after all, what, even in England, some lofty minds begin to understand. Nay, more; a glimpse has been caught of the true remedy, which has even been put into practice,—very partially, it is true, but successfully. At Leeds, at Rochdale, and elsewhere, the principle of co-operation based on an intimate alliance between the two great agents of production, capital and labour, and applied with the practical genius which characterizes the English, has already produced marvellous results. I myself heard Lord Brougham, at Glasgow, proclaim the advent of this principle as a fact of supreme importance. It is a solution invoked by John Stuart Mill, the profoundest thinker of this country. Twenty years ago Southey, the illustrious poet of Bristol, himself a Tory, said, in speaking of the co-operative system: "It is a little thing as yet—a cloud no bigger than the hand. Will it vanish into useless vapour, or will it diffuse itself in refreshing dew upon the parched and withered portion of human societies? God alone knows, and it is what time will reveal."

LETTER XVII.

A WEEK OF HORRORS.

July 15th, 1861.

A GLOOMY history is that of the week which has just finished! During the last few days there has been nothing talked of but murders. And what murders! Anything more mysterious has never been heard of.

A mother, who in the dead of night takes her three children out of their bed, and, without any assignable motive, throws them into a cistern!

A father, a man of the world, and occupying a high rank, who strikes down his own son in a narrow by-way, on returning from a visit indicating the most distinguished social position!

An officer and a bill-discounter, supposed to be unacquainted with one another, who meet by accident, and enter the house of one of the two, in order to cut each other's throats!

Here is a budget of unaccountable horrors!

I know not if you are aware in Paris of the details of the murderous assault committed by the Baron Vidil, whose surrender by the French authorities is announced in the copy of *Le Temps* which I have just received. If not, your readers will be curious, perhaps, to learn what is said of it here at the clubs, in private society, everywhere; for it has been the chief topic of conversation during the past week.

A lady of my acquaintance, who moves in the most fashionable circles of London society, had previously spoken to me of Baron Vidil as a good-natured, clever, open-hearted man, and remarkably versed in the usages and tone of high life. She had frequently had him at her own table, and thought his manners delightful. It was from her that I first heard of a tragedy which, you may well suppose, has caused in every circle frequented by the Baron, an astonishment not easily overcome.

On the 28th June, Baron Vidil set out for Claremont, accompanied by his son, a young man twenty-three years of age, who has been educated in England, and has graduated at Cambridge. As they were returning on horseback, the

father, as the report goes, expressed a desire to enter a roadside inn, to obtain some refreshment. Whether there was something odd in his manner, or that the heart of the young man was possessed, without any apparent cause, by one of those presentiments which sometimes herald the approach of a great misfortune, the latter seems to have manifested a repugnance to stop upon the road.

So they pushed on to Twickenham. It is said that just as they reached the entrance to the village, the Baron suddenly turned his horse down a shady by-road, saying, first, that he felt unwell, and then that he wished to call upon the Duc d'Aumale at Orleans House. The young man accedes to this proposition ; and the Baron plunges with his son into a winding by-road leading towards the offices of Orleans House.

They had entered upon a narrow road, shut in on one side by a wall, and on the other by a tolerably high hedge, when the father strikes his son on the head with a heavy hunting-whip with a metal handle. He repeats the blow. The unfortunate youth had his face covered with blood, but did not lose his seat. Involuntarily he touches his horse with his spur, which rears up, and, in doing so, receives on his head a blow intended for his rider. At this moment a man and a woman come into view at a turn of the road. Immediately the baron's son slips off his horse, drags himself to the woman's feet, and in his terror cries to her : "Oh ! protect me ! save me !" The man who was with her was a day-labourer, named John Rivers. As the latter was coming down the road from Orleans House, in a direction opposite to that of the two horsemen, he had been, himself unseen, a witness of the horrible scene. He had seen the father strike his son, and when the latter fell from his horse, he had heard the former cry out : "Eh ! eh ! here is your hat !"

With respect to these latter circumstances accounts do not agree. Some assert that after having received on the head three terrible blows, the young man, still preserving some strength, put his horse to the gallop, pursued by his father, and, on seeing some peasants working in a field, leaped over the hedge, crying aloud for help. However this may be, several persons having come up, the Baron, if we may believe the testimony of a boatman, named Evans, attempted to clear a railing which separated him from a pathway along the bank

of the Thames, and, on being questioned on the subject, replied that he was going for assistance. He is also stated to have said to one of the by-standers, with a view to explain the terrible spectacle presented to their eyes, that his son having stood up in his stirrups to look over the wall, the horse reared up and threw him off.

The injured man was carried into an inn. He appeared seized with terror, and besought the persons who were present not to leave him. He addressed the same prayer to the surgeon who had been called in, and who, in fact, accompanied him to London, and remained by his side until the following morning, without for one moment losing sight of him. The father also accompanied his son, but retired at midnight, the former being at the Clarendon, and the latter in Jermyn Street.

Sinister rumours, however, having got abroad, a warrant was issued, and the Baron sought refuge in France, whence he has been brought back, as you mentioned, and yesterday he appeared before the Police Court for the first time. His son, whose injuries are not so serious as was imagined, remained in an adjoining room, refusing to show himself in Court, and displaying great reluctance to give evidence. As to the accused, while they were reading to him the warrant which described him as having attempted to murder his son, he covered his face with his hands, and his attitude betrayed the most profound desolation.

A deplorable, I had almost said an odious fact! The crowd that had gathered outside in considerable numbers pursued him with groans and hisses even to the cellular van in which he was taken to the House of Correction. The disposition of the public to take part against a man who, not having yet been tried, has a right to be deemed innocent, until he has been *proved* guilty, cannot be too severely condemned.

In reality, everything is a mystery in this lamentable incident, and the diversity of opinion sufficiently shows that it includes a problem, the solution of which is still to be discovered. Some are eager to declare the accused guilty, and recall to mind that he is the widower of an English lady, whose fortune would come to him if his son died without issue, whence they conclude that he had a motive for com-

mitting the crime imputed to him. Others plead the obvious improbability of such a crime being attempted for such an object, under such circumstances. How is it to be conceived that any man in his senses would take his son to call upon illustrious personages in order to kill him, in plain daylight, on a road close to a house so full of people as that of the Duc d'Aumale, and all that in the impossible hope that no one would ever ask of him, "What have you done with your son?"

However, these are questions the clearing up of which must be left to the law courts. And when I read here, in certain journals, a full statement of the case, I cannot help admiring the wisdom of the French law, which protects the accused against the dangerous influence of premature and indiscreet commentaries. A terrible thing is a prejudiced judge, especially when that judge is all the world.

One singular incident of this affair is, that John Rivers, the principal witness, has since fallen dangerously ill, from having burst a blood-vessel. Now, as it happens that he did not give his evidence *in the presence of the accused*, it follows, according to the English law, in this respect very wise, that his testimony, though acceptable as putting justice in the right path, cannot be received as a proof.

I could wish that I had not to tell you with what affectation some of the London journals draw attention to the fact that Baron Vidil is a Frenchman. The *Morning Chronicle*, for instance, goes so far as to write: "It was only a Frenchman educated in the school of Eugene Sue and Alexander Dumas, who could be capable of proceeding to crime by such by-paths." At this rate, why not hold England and her novelists answerable for the innumerable horrors that have made the English courts ring for many years past! Alas! crime has the whole earth for its country!

But what strikes one in the remark of the *Morning Chronicle*, is not so much that which is odious in it as that which is rash; for it is impossible just now to take up an English paper without knocking up against some frightful history of a murder.

Here, it is a mother who smothers her child; there, a mother who flings her little ones into a cistern; a little further on, it is a medical man who kills a woman in trying to produce

an abortion; or it is a ship's captain who is brought before a magistrate for having outrageously beaten a poor sailor, already in ill health, and who died from the violence. And at the very time the *French* tragedy was being enacted at Twickenham, another was being played out in the very heart of London, in a street off the Strand, perfectly English.

About noon, last Friday, a man, covered with blood, leaped out of a window of No. 16, Northumberland Street, into a court in which were two workmen. He attempted to escape, but was stopped. He was an officer named Murray. Was he the perpetrator or the victim of a murderous assault? What is certain is, that he was wounded, and very grievously, having received a pistol shot in the nape of the neck.

He was transported to Charing Cross Hospital, and in the meantime notice having been given to the police, the constables penetrated into the apartment from which he had apparently attempted to escape. A horrible sight presented itself. Close to the door was lying, stretched out and motionless, a man, whose crushed head hardly retained its human form. A pool of blood, drawers wide open, papers scattered about, broken bottles, fire-tongs in fragments, pistols recently discharged, all told of a fearful drama.

But the origin of this drama, its causes, its true details, the crime or crimes to which it testifies,—all that, is still enveloped in profound obscurity. On being interrogated, Major Murray related that, on Friday last, while passing over Hungerford Bridge, he was addressed by a stranger; that this individual expressed a desire to speak to him about a business transaction in which the Major was interested; that in consequence they entered the house of the stranger, a bill-discounter named Roberts; that, while there, the officer received a pistol-shot, which having touched the vertebral column, for an instant paralysed him; that from an instinct of self-preservation, he had pretended to be dead; but that, taking advantage of a moment when his assailant had turned his back upon him, he had suddenly sprung up, had broken a bottle over his head, and afterwards had nearly done for him with a pair of tongs. It is needless to say that this story does not appear very probable. But what is the truth? Roberts, transported to Charing Cross Hospital, is still alive as well as Murray, but in a state so near to death that to the present day he has

not been able to articulate a word. There is some talk of a woman being mixed up in this affair. Let us wait till the light shines upon it.

Such a week may well be called a week of crimes. What a coincidence! Can there be a moral cholera? a malaria for murder? But there is another series of crimes which, though they may not cause one to shudder like those I have just described, are not less calculated to fix the attention of a philosopher. These are crimes which essentially belong to the organisation of societies at a given period, and it is of them I purpose to speak to you very shortly.

LETTER XVIII.

INDUSTRIAL CRIMES.

July 18th, 1861.

SOME two years ago the firm of Paul, Strahan, and Bates was quoted as one of the most flourishing and respectable houses in London. John Paul was a saint. There was no religious institution with which his name was not associated. He was never seen without a Bible under his arm. He was the born president of pious meetings, the idol of Exeter Hall. One fine morning, behold this house, blessed of heaven and blessed by men, crumble down with a frightful crash, overwhelming a multitude of families, plunging into desolation some thousands of poor credulous souls, and disclosing to view an incredible catalogue of misdemeanors. It thus appears that Sir John Paul was a Tartuffe; not the short-sighted Tartuffe whose genius was limited to the desire of taking from Orgon his wife and property, but a Tartuffe of gigantic proportions, commanding immense resources, aiming at enveloping in the net of his hypocrisy an unlimited number of victims, without distinction of age or sex.

With him religion had been only a sort of advertisement, a means to draw custom. He had done with the Bible what the American Barnum did with Jenny Lind or Tom Thumb.

Superfluous to add, that while Paul and Strahan were having recourse to all sorts of wretched expedients to mask the breach, each day growing larger, made by their frauds in the fortunes of their customers, they possessed town houses and country houses, picture galleries, and carriages, and enjoyed all the honours due to a great *respectability*. The life which they are leading at present is that which awaits the most infamous criminals when they are discovered. But that in no way improves the condition of the widows whom they have caused to perish in despair, of the greybeards they have reduced to beggary, of the orphans they have condemned to live from hand to mouth.

John Sadler, also, was a man of high *respectability*. He sat in Parliament; had occupied an eminent post in the state; had marched, head erect, proud of drawing in his train the following that a splendid success attaches to the steps of fortunate speculators. All at once it was noised abroad that a dead body had been found on the top of Hampstead Hill. By the side of the deceased was a labelled bottle announcing death by poisoning, and indicating the probability of a suicide. Moreover, care had been taken by the heedful self-murderer that whosoever discovered the body could instantaneously know its name. John Sadler had been engaged I know not how many years in fabricating forged deeds, in lying, stealing, undermining the fortunes of others to swell his own, and when the moment came for the veil to be rent asunder, he did justice on himself with his own hand.

In 1856 you might have seen placarded in capital letters, before the door of every second-hand book-shop, inside and outside of omnibuses, in the place of honour on newsmen's stalls, in short, everywhere, these two magic syllables, *Palmer*. Palmer was a medical man, and, besides, a gambler. He took a keen interest in horseracing, he speculated, he loved money passionately, and he could not do without it. One of his friends, John Parsons Cook, was also a great betting man. Though of an excellent constitution, Cook suddenly fell ill, after partaking of some beverage which his doctor friend had offered him. At this period Palmer's affairs were in a desperate condition. The usurers pressed and threatened him. Palmer had forged his mother's name. So they proceeded against both mother and son. He had to pay 450*l.*, and at

once. Cook had that amount with him, having just won it at the Shrewsbury races: his money disappears. Some bets were due to him in London: his illness is prolonged, thanks to his medical friend, until the amount of those bets is sent from London. The sick man being in no condition to take charge of the remittances, his friend does it for him, and applies them to his own use. On the morrow Cook dies. In his blood, when analysed by men of science, antimony alone is found; but direct evidence and an overwhelming combination of circumstances establishes the proof of poisoning by strychnine, and that the fatal dose has been administered forty-eight hours before death. Was this the only murder committed by the accused? So many pallid phantoms seemed to gather around him, that at Rugely, the scene of his guilt, there was for a moment some talk among the people of opening the graveyard to make the ashes of the dead speak! But human justice, not having yet invented the means of putting a criminal to death twice over, what good could result from this frightful extravagance of investigation? Palmer was hanged. He had passed from the thirst for gold to a passion for gambling, from a passion for gambling to insolvency, from insolvency to forgery, from forgery to poisoning, from poisoning to the gallows.

This happened about the month of May, 1856. In January, 1857,—observe the closeness of the dates,—a new history, not stained with blood this time, but adding a not less curious page to the annals of instructive crime. Two men meet and converse, and their conversation turns upon the practicability of entering upon the possession of a notable portion of the ingots of gold which from time to time travel on the South-Eastern Railway. Are these two men miserable beings, without a roof to shelter or a fire to warm them, and driven to such a daring act by excessive destitution? Not at all. They are pressed by no want of means. They have capital to place out profitably,—nothing more. Pierce is in a position to carry out undertakings that require time. He has money to pay for cab-hire, for making long journeys. He can pay for several lodgings at the same time. Agar, who has been to the United States, where he has largely speculated, largely practised and completely mastered the science of forgery, Agar, who reckons not less than fourteen years of active experience, is the proprietor of 3000*l.*, which he has invested in the Funds

like a good citizen, and as a prudent family man might have done. But prudence does not exclude the spirit of enterprise, and he is ready to apply this money to the first profitable operation that shall present itself. What operation more directly advantageous can be imagined than that which consists in stealing ingots of gold? In the olden time, when military manners were in vogue and the high roads were traversed in coaches, men concealed themselves in a corner of a wood, after arming themselves to the teeth, and — fire! But men have been taught by civilization to dispense with blunderbusses. Pierce and Agar understand the age in which they live — what they do, they will do as a matter of business. Unfortunately it is no trifle, the affair they have in hand. It will require considerable advances, a series of profound combinations, an expenditure of no common order of genius, and several months of preparation, observation, journeyings, marchings, and countermarchings. The ingots of gold are transported in iron chests: how to get at these chests, — not to carry them off, for that is impossible, but to open them? There are keys: how find out to whom they are confided, where they are placed, and how to obtain possession of them just long enough to take a hurried impression of them in wax? And supposing this first difficulty overcome, how manufacture the keys from the impression without betraying the dangerous secret, and in such a manner that, when manufactured, they shall open without a hitch the gates of the Garden of the Hesperides? This problem solved, how discover by what train will be forwarded a quantity of gold sufficient to pay for the trouble of robbing it? This information obtained, by what means effect an entrance into the compartment in which the chests are deposited, without being noticed by any one? The chests emptied, where place the gold that has been taken from them, and in virtue of what infallible calculation replace it by an equivalent weight, so as to countercheck, on the arrival of the train, the rough weighing of the metal! And, lastly, how leave the compartment, the invisible theatre of these wonders, without having attracted the slightest attention, without having incurred the slightest suspicion, and walk quietly away, loaded with such ponderous *spolia opima*? This is what was attempted, and most successfully accomplished. It is quite a romance, which for a whole

year has been working itself out with all the changes and chances required by novelistic art. The golden fleece carried off was 12,000*l.*, and I am certain that the expedition of the Argonauts was not half so well recompensed. And note this: the achievers of this astonishing feat of industry would never have been discovered, if Agar, imprisoned for some other exploit, had not committed to the safe keeping of Pierce his share of the plunder and his mistress, and if Pierce, abusing the confidence of his accomplice, had not provoked revengeful revelations. The two speculators, contriving to gain the railway official in whose power it was to procure for them the temporary possession of the keys, and the one in whose power it was to admit them into the compartment occupied by the chests; then going to reside for some weeks at Folkestone, watching the arrival of every train, initiating themselves into the habits of each official, ascertaining in which office and in which cupboard were lodged the coveted keys, succeeding in seizing, in imitating them; changing their abode, disguising their fair hair under dark wigs; causing bullion which was theirs to be forwarded to themselves, in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the business,—in short, winning this memorable victory! Such is the spectacle presented, not four months ago, by a trial which this country will not quickly forget.

And about the same time, with far less trouble, and without at all putting himself to inconvenience, a gentleman, named Leopold Redpath, robbed the Great Northern Railway Company, by a peculiar mode of working the transfers, of a sum of 40,000*l.*, the fruit of many years' *labour*, and of an uninterrupted series of frauds, which he did not take the trouble to vary. It is needless to add that, although a simple railway official, Mr. Redpath frequented and entertained the best society, lived in great style, admitted to the honour of his friendship men of mark, and, attaching fabulous prices to objects of caprice, purchased Pradiers that had seemed too dear to powerful sovereigns.

So goes the world, since it has been agreed that generous aspirations, noble sentiments, the satisfaction of a duty accomplished, the pursuit of a great object, intellectual or moral, are the chimera of weak minds; since "to make money" has become the supreme occupation of life; since the discovery of

steam, the establishment of railroads, the application of the telegraph, the developments of industrial genius, the science of wealth—things all admirable in themselves—have been made subservient to the devouring conquests of cupidity, and to the triumph of a pride that is seated in the belly, instead of in the head and the heart.

I am aware that in all ages there has been villainy and crime; but what one had not hitherto seen was, thieves of the lowest stamp figuring, like one of those I have just mentioned, at the top of the social ladder, and others like Paul and Strahan, or like Pierce and Agar, constituting a regular firm, acting with the aid of considerable funds, applying to a work of spoliation the division of labour and the pure principles of political economy, and submitting to the rules of an irreproachable arithmetic, so far as they are concerned, the distribution of their infamous profits. What! Have the marvellous discoveries of modern genius and the progress made in the science of happiness, resulted in nothing better than in clothing vice in a new armour? Ah, it is one of those monstrous phenomena against which, whenever the occasion occurs, every healthy mind must rise in protest. It is time, it is indeed time, to do so. For you may well imagine that such facts as the above, when they succeed each other so rapidly, are symptoms of a cadaverous situation. It is not what they *are* that is alone to be looked at, but what they *indicate*. The liberty of the press in England drags many things into light; does it drag all? How many hidden, but half-suspected abysses!

LETTER XIX.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

July 22nd, 1861.

SOME years ago there was a report that Lord Brougham was dead. Immediately there was a flood of commentaries upon what he had been, and what he had done. *The attacks were lively. It is so easy to assail the dead! But lo! one

fine morning, Lord Brougham discovered that he was alive, and sufficiently well to bury one after another all those who had delivered such fine funeral orations over him ; in that respect not unlike the Polichinel of the Marionnettes, who, after having been knocked on the head, picks himself up fresher, and nimbler, and more full of fight than ever. It was suspected that the false report of his death was only started with a view to discount the judgment of posterity.

Can it, peradventure, be the same with the rumour that singles out Lord John Russell as on the point of being raised to the peerage ? I fear not. Although, in Lord John, the fire of the spirit still burns beneath the ashes, it cannot be denied that bodily fatigue and the weight of years have of late shown themselves in a very striking manner. In the House of Commons, of late years, his appearance has been so languid, his elocution so hesitating, his voice so feeble ! His speeches fill the reporters with despair, and the cry of " Speak up ! speak up !" seems to have been invented for him. What a difference when, after him, rises his great rival Lord Palmerston ! And how the robust air of the premier, his vigorous organisation and eloquence, ever young in a green old age, form a bold relief to the physical enervation of poor Lord John, reduced to utter sounds scarcely more audible than silence itself !

If, as it is positively stated, he has decided upon quitting the House of Commons because the Reform Bill, with which, to a certain degree, he was identified, has been set aside by the Cabinet, nothing could be more honourable than his retirement.

It is a fact to which, as it seems to me, the English attach a somewhat exaggerated political importance, but which testifies to the high position which Lord John has achieved in this country.

How, in fact, can it be forgotten that he fought the battle of freedom at a time when liberalism was held in strong disfavour ; that he took up the attitude of a reformer at a time when people fancied they saw the spectre of revolution rise up behind every denomination of reform ; and that he bravely pleaded the cause of religious liberty at a time when public opinion was so strong against Dissenters and Catholics, that to attempt to swim against the stream was exposing oneself to

be swallowed up? How many battles have there not been delivered by him against the genius of routine, from his first entrance into Parliament as representative of the Whig borough of Tavistock? His opposition to Lords Liverpool and Castlereagh, his eagerness to adopt the principle of Parliamentary Reform, and his invincible ardour in supporting it, these are noble memories in the life of a public man, and ought to make him a comfortable pillow when the moment arrives for him to sleep for ever!

And certainly no one has had to win his *chevrons* more laboriously than Lord John Russell; for it was only in 1830, under Lord Grey, after seventeen years of parliamentary services, that he was admitted to the regions of power, in the capacity of Paymaster of the Forces. The friends of progress will ever preserve the recollection of the support which he lent to Lord Grey's administration. It was he who, with Lord Durham, Sir James Graham, and Lord Duncannon, introduced the Reform Bill into the debates of the House of Commons. It was he who demonstrated its necessity, who prepared its triumph. What stormy days were those! The blast of passion blew from every quarter. Who knows not that it became necessary to dissolve Parliament, and that the Bill, adopted by the new House of Commons, was thrown out by the Lords? In that contest no one ever saw Lord John bend or hesitate. He was intrepid because he was sincere, and the popularity which was his recompense then, has never entirely deserted him since.

Where he appeared to hesitate, was in the celebrated—I had almost said the tragical—question of the Corn Laws. For some time he seemed to recoil before the repeal of the law, and the establishment of a fixed duty found in him an advocate. But in 1845 the light dawned upon his heart, at least as much as upon his mind, for the people's daily bread was at stake; and, noble deserter of a cause he had discovered to be wrong, he passed, arms and baggage, into the camp of the repealers.

In 1841, at the very height of the popular agitation produced by the Corn Law debates, he had been elected member for the City of London, which he has never since ceased to represent in Parliament. Appointed Premier, when that high function became vacant through the fall of Sir Robert Peel,

he had under him Lord Palmerston, who occupied in the Cabinet the post of Foreign Secretary ; and I need scarcely remind you that if the latter was forced to resign, it was because of the approval he bestowed upon the *Coup d'Etat* in December, an approval that was not shared by Lord John Russell.

He was President of the Council when, in 1854, he presented a new Reform Bill, which the Crimean war caused to be thrown out. But his name has been so indissolubly attached to the principle of Parliamentary Reform, that again last year he pledged himself to this effect, to his own party and to the public.

In short, of all the great measures which for the last thirty years have marked the stages of progress in England, there has not been one to which he has not more or less contributed.

What, now, are likely to be the consequences to himself and to the country, of his elevation to the peerage ? It is said that he will still continue to be the Foreign Secretary, and, in this respect at least, those who place their trust in him will have nothing to regret. So long as he is commissioned to speak to Europe in the name of England, it may be regarded as certain that the voice of Freedom will never fail to awaken loud echoes through the world. But, in his absence, what will become, in the House of Commons, of that question of Parliamentary Reform for which one has become accustomed to look to his initiative, and to which no one seems so capable as himself of giving a satisfactory and practical solution ? If it be given to another to bear aloft the banner which hitherto men have been pleased to see streaming out from between his hands, it cannot be doubted that his glory will suffer ; for he will have left his task incomplete. He will not have fully redeemed the pledges of his entire life, especially if, in interring himself in the House of Lords, he continues to form part of a Ministry that has opposed the accomplishment of his most cherished wishes, and in the midst of which he will henceforth have to support, the *rôle* of a man beaten, but content. It is this which makes his friends so anxious, and causes them to consider as little to be coveted, on his behalf, the honour of sitting on the benches of the Upper House, and the prospective ribbon of the Garter.

Again, in quitting this House of Commons which he has led with so much experience and authority, does not Lord John Russell blot himself out for ever, as compared with Lord Palmerston, as an aspirant to the post of Premier? Lord Wellington was right when he said that the post of Premier should always be filled by a member of the Lower House. It is, in fact, the rule, and the exceptions rather confirm than weaken that rule. Lord Melbourne, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Derby, have certainly each in his turn enjoyed the privileges of the premiership; but, in reality, they were rather honorary than actual ministers; they adorned rather than supported the edifice. The elevation of Lord John to the peerage puts a definitive term to his long rivalry with Lord Palmerston, whom it leaves master of the House of Commons, or, in other words, of the field of battle.

Is it an advantage? Is it an evil?

For my part, I confess that it is towards Lord John Russell my own sympathies have always leaned. Lord Palmerston is a brilliant genius, gifted with all the qualities that fascinate and seduce; but those who know him are well aware how completely usurped is the reputation for liberalism he enjoys in Europe. That he should be a Tory at heart, a Tory to the very marrow in his bones, will naturally appear strange to those who, beholding him from afar, see him only as the head of a Liberal Ministry. There is nothing, however, more certain. Abroad, Lord Palmerston has never served the cause of constitutionalism for its own sake, but from a point of view absolutely and essentially English.

Europe has been mistaken in this, well nigh to the extent of regarding as a busybody and intermeddler, a Conservative of the purest water. At home, it would be hard to mention a single reform that Lord Palmerston has desired. But, I repeat it, he is English—English before everything—English before being human, before being just. This is the reason why he always has been, and always will be, popular in this country, come what may. What a victory was that he won, at the time of the first disputes of England with China! It was in the name of right, of humanity, of justice, that such men as Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, Mr. Cobden, Mr. Milner Gibson, had the imprudence to attack him—him who on that occasion spoke in the name of the interests of England. What happened? The House

of Commons having inadvertently pronounced against him, he declared Parliament dissolved, and appealed to the country, which hastened to pronounce in his favour. All his adversaries, as I have before mentioned, were left on the field. Never, in the electoral arena, was there a more murderous and complete execution. The city of Manchester itself spat upon and trampled under foot all its gods. Lord John Russell—let him be thankful to Heaven for it—cannot congratulate himself on any such successes. He has decidedly none of the suppleness, or brilliancy, or gracefulness of Lord Palmerston; but he has principles. His reputation, whatever it be, is what he has merited. His popularity has never been the work of a sleight of hand, neither has he ever won glory by a trick.

Not that criticism has to lay down its arms in his presence. If he has served the cause of progress, he has done so, it must be owned, without sufficiently believing in it. He has said to himself, "Much *for* the people;" but at the bottom of his thoughts will be found, I fear, "Nothing *by* the people." He has shown himself in all things as eager to leave off as to begin, whence the surname of "Finality Jack," provided for him by the jovial sagacity of John Bull.

In reality, he has been nothing but a Whig; that is, a Liberal doubled up with an aristocrat; but that, at least, he has been sincerely and honestly. Now-a-days, the old distinction between Whigs and Tories having given place to a larger and more *comprehensive* distinction—that which separates Conservatives and Liberals—Lord John Russell's characteristic attributes stand out all the more clearly. In him will disappear the last of the Whigs.

LETTER XX.

PUBLIC OPINION AS A COURT OF APPEAL.

July 28th, 1861.

THERE is something passing in England which would appear very strange in France, but which here appears to be the simplest thing in the world—so much do those two great countries differ. But in the question that suggests this remark, in favour of which of the two nations does the contrast plead? You shall judge for yourself.

I have already told you, as you may perhaps remember, that one day in London, in Northumberland Street, Strand, an officer named Murray was arrested, as he leaped out of a window, and was wounded by a pistol-shot in the nape of the neck. The police having penetrated into the room from which this man had escaped, found another man there stretched, almost lifeless, upon the floor, mutilated, horribly bruised, and disfigured fearfully, terribly. A dreadful struggle had evidently taken place. Everything bore witness to that—the blood which saturated the carpet, soiled the walls and stained the doors—the awful confusion that reigned in the apartment—the furniture upset—fragments of fire-tongs lying amid broken bottles—on the table, pistols recently discharged—others on the ground—a revolver. The demon of murder had passed that way.

There were two victims—which of the two was the assassin? Nothing more mysterious than the traces of that tragedy; nothing more obscure than its tokens. The door of the apartment was found securely fastened. Of the two rooms of which the suite consisted, one was filled with a diversity of curious objects covered with dust, the other with papers scattered in the blood. Round the fire-place were seen several marks of pistol-balls, as if some one had been for some time past exercising himself in pistol-shooting with closed doors—which was really the case, the neighbours declaring that they had been in the habit of hearing pistol-shots discharged in this strange place, resembling at once the cavern of a usurer and the den of an assassin.

What had passed between the officer Murray and the discounter Roberts that could have brought them to fight together like wild beasts? The latter, already in the grasp of death, could barely articulate. The former, less grievously wounded, was able to do so, but what was it he said? He stated that Roberts had addressed him in the street, giving Gray as his name, and had spoken to him about a loan; that he had asked him into his house, which Murray entered without suspicion, though he knew neither by name nor by sight the maker of this extraordinary proposition; and that once in the stranger's den, he had been forced to kill him with the tongs to prevent himself from being killed with pistol-shots. Not a word about any attempt at theft; and all this in broad daylight, and in a frequented thoroughfare! Was there ever a romance so seemingly improbable? "You do not at all know him whom you denounce as your murderer?" asked the constable. To which Murray replied "No." "Do you know why he wished to kill you?" "Not at all." As for the money-scrivener, several questions were put to him, to which he made scarce any reply. He was then dying, and they will ask him no more—for he is dead.

However, among the papers seized on the field of battle, the police picked up a sheet of blotting-paper, which being held up to the light, allowed these words to be seen: "Mrs. Murray, Elm-Lodge, Tottenham." At the coroner's inquest, this scrap of paper proved the key to the mystery. Mistress Murray, being summoned before the jury, was obliged to give her evidence, and the facts disclosed in her evidence were to the following effect:—

Mistress Murray's real name is Miss Moody. The Major's mistress, she lived with him at the address indicated above. Although the Major acted very generously by her, she one day found herself in great want of money; and as she feared to abuse her lover's liberality, she thought of having recourse to Roberts the bill-discounter, of whom she had heard people speak. The latter advanced what she wanted, fell in love with her, and told her so. Dangerous relations of intimacy became established between them. Relations of love? She denied it, but what she does not deny, is a correspondence that was produced, from which I shall make some extracts.

"How can I express to you my gratitude for the pleasure which your letter has caused me? I could fill with my love for you many sheets of paper, but something, I know not what, seems at this moment to stop my thoughts. All that I desire, is to rest my head upon your shoulder and weep for joy (not without some mixture of sadness) over the remembrance of so many happy days we have passed together."

In another letter, written in an emotional style, she offers a profusion of thanks to the money-lender for having sent her, for her child, the most charming presents, and finishes by saying, "May you live happy and count as many years as we have spent days together!"

On being questioned as to the meaning of these effusions, she explained that she had never entertained any of the sentiments expressed in these letters; that they were only on her part a deception to escape the dreaded consequences of a tyrannical protection; that she loved Murray, and detested Roberts; but that she was constrained to keep fair with the latter, master of a secret which she sought at any price to keep from the knowledge of the former.

Love, jealousy, an unbridled desire to get rid of a rival, this would furnish the key of the mystery which has so much piqued public curiosity, especially if it be true, as Miss Moody has declared, that the bill-discounter, who was unknown to the officer, knew the latter, knew him to be the lover of the woman he himself loved, and watched their little expeditions, their proceedings, their movements, with the watchfulness of a wild animal.

This was the conclusion at which the jury arrived, and a verdict of "Justifiable Homicide" was returned in favour of Major Murray, to the great satisfaction of the audience, who had been, it seems, keenly touched by the bearing and depositions of his mistress.

Now, if this trial had taken place in France, I need not tell you that the press would have abstained from all commentary. *Res judicata pro veritate habetur.* Nothing of the kind; here every one judges the *thing judged*. I cast my eye upon certain journals; and though Roberts has died without any one being able to hear him or defend him—though his wife and family are there—I read in those journals a vehement denunciation of the wickedness of the deceased. He had the soul of a

usurer in the body of a wild beast with the face of a man. He was a monster.

And all this time other journals, taking up the jury, accuse them of want of intelligence, reproach them with being over-hasty, turn them into ridicule, laugh them to scorn, and condemn them, and drag before their own tribunal the acquitted Major. How many questions suggest themselves when too late ! How many comments—I had almost said posthumous ! But, luckily for himself, Murray is still alive ! Why, when he found himself face to face with an assassin, did he not at once call out for help ? Was it his voice that failed him, when, with a ball in the nape of his neck, he was able to make such a murderous use of his arms ? And when his enemy was little better than a dead man, why did he fling himself into the courtyard, instead of opening the window, if he could not get out by the door, and call out “ Murder ! ” ? At least, he need not have fled with the air of a malefactor who fears to be arrested, leaping over a wall ! And the evidence of his mistress, was it really of a nature to be accepted as an article of faith ? Sympathise with her, if you will—provided, however, you do not believe without reserve all that is said by a woman who, by her own confession, deceived at once her lover and her lover’s rival : the former, in concealing from him what he ought to have known ; the latter, in writing to him letters full of a pretended love which her heart contradicted.

I should never finish, were I to attempt to tell you in how many ways the press has recommenced a trial which, in France, would have terminated with the verdict of the jury. The very preciseness of Murray’s answers, according to some, leaves an opening for suspicion, and they would almost be induced to condemn him for this grave motive, that in leaping out of the window he methodically carried away his umbrella with him—which, indeed, is a thoroughly characteristic trait of English habits.

It is clear the English do not at all feel our respect for the thing judged. Is that equivalent to saying that they respect it less ? Assuredly not ; but the homage which they render to it is that of a free and intelligent people, who place nothing, absolutely nothing, above the sovereignty of reason. Knowing that judges and juries are fallible, England refuses them that

privilege of infallibility which nations that like to be led in leading-strings so readily accord to their masters. Knowing to what an extent human justice is liable to error, the English esteem it unworthy of them to make a mystery of it.

I have read somewhere an anecdote, which, if I rightly remember, was something like this:—

There was at Seville, in the time of Pedro III., a canon, who in the matter of clothes and shoes was very hard to please, and who, moreover, was very passionate. One day, some shoes having been brought to him which were not at all to his liking, he fell into such a fury with the shoe-maker as to give him a blow that killed him on the spot. The Chapter of Seville, by way of punishment, forbade the murderer *to appear in the choir for a whole year*. Some time afterwards, the son of the murdered man having met the canon, slew him with his dagger; whereupon the ecclesiastical tribunal lost no time in condemning the son, who had avenged his father, *to be quartered*. Pedro III. being informed of this decision, at once annulled the sentence of the clergy, and having summoned the man into his presence, asked him what his calling was. "I am a shoemaker, as my father was," replied the poor wretch. "Well, then," said the king, "I condemn you *not to make any shoes for a whole year!*"

The English, while leaving to the Crown this sublime privilege, the right of pardon, have reserved to themselves the right of enlightening and directing its exercise by means of the press. I do not hesitate to say that that is one of the great aspects of their national character and history. Their supreme court of appeal is public opinion expressing itself aloud. Every virile soul will congratulate them on it.

It must be owned, however, that when it is against an acquittal that protests are raised, this absolute right of control has in it something singularly harsh and even inhuman, for it may be conceived that there can be no great danger to society in allowing a criminal to escape, while in striking down an innocent man the peril is immense, for there is not an honest man in the country whose security is not shaken by the shock. It would be desirable, therefore, that the right of public control, as regards the thing judged, should be exercised only in cases of condemnation. But the very abuse made of this right in a country where the guarantees secured to the

accused are so numerous, so provident, and so inviolable, this very abuse sufficiently proves that the English consider themselves as no longer in a state of pupillage, and that in their eyes there is no right more worthy of reverence, more sacred, than that which comprises all the others—the liberty of being in the right.

LETTER XXI.

NEUTRALITY OF THE GOVERNMENT BETWEEN WORKMEN
AND MASTERS.*August 3rd, 1861.*

LAST Monday I was passing through Palace Gardens, when I met a journeyman bricklayer, named John —. I had known him for two years, and had discovered in him great qualities of head and heart. I accosted him, and the following conversation ensued :—

I. “ Well, John, how are you getting on ? ”

John. “ Indeed, Sir, for poor devils like myself the times are hard ; but, according to our English proverb, ‘ Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just.’ Thank God, I have good health, a clear conscience, and a stout heart.”

I. “ So the workhouse has not yet claimed you ? ”

John. “ What do you mean ? ”

I took out of my pocket a number of *Punch*, and showed him the cartoon. It represented a Unionist workman leaning against the wall of a workhouse, that variation of our “ dépôts de mendicité.” What an agonising history was written in that fixed and hopeless look, in those cheeks hollowed by famine, in the wrinkles of that furrowed brow ! The poor wretch was covered with rags, and another workman was putting into his hand a piece of money which the other accepted mechanically, without turning his head, without looking at anything, without seeing anything, as if lost in the world of his own thoughts, or rather of his own griefs. Between the one who offered the alms and the one who received it, the contrast was terrible. The latter had an ani-

mated eye, a full face, and an expression indicating an habitual state of contentment. On his cap was to be read the word "Non-Unionist." Dressed becomingly, he appeared to be in want of nothing, and could evidently afford himself the luxury of being charitable. So he came to the assistance of his unfortunate comrade, not without addressing him a friendly word of reproach: "*Ah! Bill, I knew well that the Union would lead you there!*"

My companion examined the engraving in silence, smiled bitterly, and returned it to me with a gesture of disdain. Our conversation was then resumed.

John. These *Punch* gentlemen are certainly very witty, but they have not the wit to hold their tongue about things which they don't understand. It would be very strange that for workmen the best method of escaping want was to face it one by one! It is as if it was pretended that for soldiers to attack an enemy one by one is the best method of escaping death! Those among us who have felt the necessity of acting in earnest have obeyed, in banding themselves together, the law of general safety which creates armies. Is it our fault if poverty, which watches for and pounces upon us as we come out of our cradle, resigns our destiny to all the assaults of chance? Is it our fault if, our wages depending upon the relations between supply and demand,—that blind, fluctuating law which lies so fatally beyond our control,—we are led to close up, shoulder to shoulder, against those who are not of us, in order to better hold in check the tyranny that regulates the earning of food? Yes, sir, for the poor man organisation and discipline are indispensable, because, for him, labour is a battle. How could isolation, the privilege of the strong, ever become the wisdom of the weak? We have not only to earn our livelihood, we have to conquer it. The Workhouse? Ah! sir, ask its pale-faced inmates if it was the principle of association that led them there.

I. Allow me, however, to remind you that on these questions all your comrades do not think as you do; for, in fact, the Trades Unions are far from embracing the whole body of workmen.

John. And what does that prove, but that all have not yet risen to a clear notion of their interests? But have patience! However, Mr. *Punch* is strangely mistaken if he imagines that

between Unionists and Non-Unionists there exists that opposition of views which he is pleased to illustrate. Are you aware, sir, that in the present strike, for instance, the majority of the workmen who refuse to submit to the system of payment by the hour, who are in consequence without work, and who avail themselves of the species of subscription by means of which the strike is maintained, are Non-Society's Men? The fact is, that between the Unionist and the Non-Unionist there is a perfect understanding. Both the one and the other, on the present occasion, think, feel, and act in common. Both the one and the other concert together by means of delegates, assemble in the same meetings, raise funds and vote for their employment, with the same object in view. If the Workhouse, then, were one day to swallow up the one, it would swallow up the other also, and *Punch's* Non-Unionist would have no power to help poor Bill with either his money or his advice.

I. But I have heard several persons say, and have read in several newspapers, that the present strike was only brought about through the perverse activity of a few agitators.

John. Ah! yes, it is what is always said in such cases. I remember that Lord Brougham having one day, at Bradford, spoken very violently against the committee that had directed the celebrated strike at Preston, Mr. Cowell rose and said: "The committee in question was comprised of eleven persons, of whom I was one. The strike lasted thirty-six weeks. We had to feed 17,000 men. We distributed among them 96,000*l.* The sufferings endured during that time of trial were horrible, and yet not a complaint, not a murmur was heard against us. We rendered an account of our stewardship to the last farthing. We insisted upon our own accounts being submitted to the most minute examination, and the unbounded confidence with which our comrades then honoured us, they have invariably retained ever since. Let Lord Brougham then explain by what right he denounces us as dishonest agitators!" They now, sir, pursue the same system, and the same motive that led to the attack on Mr. Cowell leads to the attack on Mr. Potter. If you knew Mr. Potter, you would find him, I am convinced, a man as upright as he is firm and intelligent. He is him-

self a workman, and a very skilful workman, and it is his own cause he defends in defending ours.

I. So you think that it is really the whole body of workmen who are opposed to the system of payment by the hour being substituted for that of payment by the day?

John. Certainly. And what more striking proof could I give you than the eagerness of all the bricklayers in the kingdom to help the strike, so far as they can, by a weekly and voluntary contribution? If the majority of the workmen were not with us, could those scenes have occurred which we have witnessed? Would the workmen employed by Mr. Myers, to take only one example, have lived the life of prisoners in their building-yard, taking their food in the place of their labour, sleeping in the sheds, trembling to venture along the streets, or only doing so at nightfall and in close conveyances?

I. I confess that is not one of the points in the proceedings of your Trades Unions of which I can approve! It seems to me unjust, degrading, barbarous, to deprive a poor wretch of his individual right to earn his daily bread, unless he would be watched, insulted, and even assaulted.

John. I might reply to you that wherever there is a oneness of interests, a oneness of efforts is indispensable, and that to uphold one's individual right by abandoning the common cause, borders upon treason. I admit, however, that there is much to be said against the violent practice of the pickets. But then, in your turn, you must acknowledge that the efficacy of this mode of coercion shows undeniably on which side are the numbers; for how can it be supposed that a large mass of workmen would allow themselves to be intimidated by a handful of busybodies? Besides, do you want figures? Of about 6000 regular bricklayers employed in the metropolis, the number of those who work upon the system of payment by the hour does not exceed 500. When this system was introduced, the desertion in the building-yards was immediate and universal. It is certain that some of the establishments which adopted the payment-by-hour system are entirely deserted, and that more than thirty establishments, employing upwards of 200 workmen, have already returned to the custom that has always prevailed until now. It is true that the greater part of the carpenters have consented

to remain at work, but under protest. As for the plasterers, they thrust aside the proposed innovation in a very unmistakable manner.

I. You attach great importance, then, to this question of payment by the hour?

John. Doubtless. And what is there surprising in that? By the system in vogue until the present time, that of payment by the day, we enjoy a multitude of trifling advantages of which the innovation put forward by the contractors precisely aims at depriving us: 1stly. When they engage us, they allow us two hours to go for our tools, and those two hours count as work; 2ndly. It is for the entire day they are accustomed to pay us, if they send us away before the end of the day; and this usage has been confirmed many and many times by judicial decisions: 3rdly. When heavy showers of rain come on—no rare event in England—our day's earnings do not suffer from the necessity of seeking shelter for the moment. 4thly. When the job is pressing, and we are called upon to work beyond the ten hours which constitute the regular day's work, we are paid for the overtime with a bonus of fifty per cent. Farewell to all that, if payment by the hour comes into force.

I. But, if I remember rightly, I have read workmen's manifestoes in which the practice you call "overtime" is stigmatised as an odious abuse, and in which men who are willing to work beyond the ten hours are denounced as selfish beings, forestallers of labour, and traitors. By what extraordinary contradiction do you now describe as a privilege worth preserving what you yourselves have so often represented as an abuse to be done away with?

John. Pardon me, sir, you are confounding here two things perfectly distinct—accidental overtime and systematic overtime. That in exceptional circumstances, and where there is real urgency, one of our comrades should consent to supplementary labour, we have no wish to consider as amiss, and for such a case we desire, as is only fair, the maintenance of a remuneration proportionally higher. What we repudiate and what we have always condemned is, the regular and unbroken continuation of work beyond the limits agreed upon for all, *by* all. And why? Because we consider ourselves as brethren; because labour is a domain which must not be

given up to a few to monopolise; because a surplus of employment accepted by one is a sort of larceny practised upon another; in a word, because we want the sun to shine a little for everybody!

I. Very good; but it is for you workmen to see to that; the contractors have nothing to do with it. And, after all, what can be more equitable than the proposition they make to you: "Work as many hours as you please, and you shall be paid accordingly"?

John. Equitable at first sight, yes; but go to the bottom of the question, and you will perceive that it is precisely to the practice of systematic "overtime" that the payment by hour tends. Do you not see, in fact, that when all time limits have disappeared—when, by the fact of this custom having become the universal law, the workmen have lost their banner—when each of them shall be invited to treat only with the contractor, individually and singly, without reference to any received regulations, without reference to any common principle, our lot will cease entirely to be in our own hands, and that more than ever the masters will be our masters? What answer can one make, when in want of bread and with children to feed, to him who says: "You must work twelve hours; if not, go elsewhere"?

I. I don't see that this alternative is so very dreadful, so long as the demand is in excess of the supply.

John. Agreed; but when labour is in greater supply than demand, which is so frequently the case? You gentlemen economists, you reason always as if the workman could *wait*. If the supply, we are told, exceeds the demand to-day, the moment will come when the demand will be in excess of the supply. Unfortunately, while the grass grows, the steed dies of hunger. Do you wish me to tell you what there is a risk of happening if we were to give way, or were forced to give way, in such circumstances? It is that they would hire us only for a few hours when work was not very pressing, taking care to make us work beyond measure in the contrary case. I say beyond measure, because, in London, if you take into consideration that on an average we require one hour for going to the building-yard and one hour for returning to our home, you will own that ten hours of work *per diem* are the most that it is reasonable to exact from human strength. Beyond this limit the

workman becomes exhausted, and is unfit for the labour of the following day; so that in this respect the interest of the contractor is, in fact, bound up with that of the workman.

I. But if you understand that so perfectly, why do you suppose the masters are incapable of understanding it also?

John. Many of them, Heaven be praised, seem to have understood it; and the proof is that of some five hundred establishments which exist in London there are not more than eighty that have adopted the payment by the hour and show any disposition to hold out. How long will that last? We shall see. In the meantime public opinion is becoming enlightened. Has not the justice of our cause been publicly proclaimed within the last few days by Messrs. Thomas Hughes, Ludlow, Hutton, Beesly, Litchfield, Godfrey, Lushington, and Garrison? It will not be said, I hope, that they are not *gentlemen*, or that they are wanting in *respectability*. Are you acquainted with them?

I. I am personally acquainted with the first two, and, what is more, I am proud of their friendship. Both the one and the other are men of eminent ability, and it will be long before the republic of letters forgets the sensation produced in England by Mr. Hughes's last book, in which the associations of a studious youth are depicted with such distinctness, such charming gracefulness.

John. You have read, I presume, the two letters written by all these gentlemen in common, in reference to our quarrel: are you aware of the effect they have produced on public opinion?

I. Not only have I read those letters, but I have also admired the noble sentiment that dictated them. It is a fine thing to see men of letters, barristers, men of the world, individuals in no way connected with the working classes, either by habits and education, or by the nature of their pursuits, and still less by their social position, spontaneously devoting their time to a laborious investigation, without any other motive than the desire to contribute to the triumph of justice, and publishing the suggestions and teachings resulting from this investigation. This appeal to the reason of the public does honour also to the country to which it is made. These are things that are possible only in the midst of a great and a free people!

A flash of patriotic pride lighted up the eyes of the English workman, and for a while he remained silent under deep emotion, when he continued as follows:—

John. It is, indeed, fortunate that public opinion should have the power to prevent our Government from following its own devices; for see how it has acted towards us in the matter of the Chelsea Barracks. A contractor undertakes to finish the barracks at Chelsea within a given time, in default of which he agrees to forfeit a considerable sum. Just as the fatal period is about to expire, he takes it into his head to impose upon his bricklayers this new and disastrous innovation, the payment by the hour. The latter abandon his yard. The works are suspended. The contractor sees himself on the point of being obliged to pay the forfeit. What does the Government do? It lends to the defaulting contractor its sappers and engineers, thus throwing its whole weight against the liberty of agreements. Was there ever a more patent act of partiality, a more crying injustice? But they are mistaken if they think to overcome us by means of that kind. Our brethren in the country will support us. Open-air meetings are preparing at Manchester. The agitation, as it spreads from one point to another, will become all the more formidable when it is known that we are in danger of being oppressed, and we will resist to the death.

John had worked himself up till he spoke with extreme vehemence, and his face betrayed the deepest indignation. When I tried to calm him and insisted upon the necessity of a conciliatory attitude, he exclaimed almost rudely: "You are not aware then, sir, that we proposed the arbitration of the Council of Architects, and that this proposition was rejected with scorn?" Our conversation had now lasted a long time. I brought it to a close by reminding John that all these periodical crises could not fail sadly to injure the situation of the workmen; that strikes were adding only one evil to another; that the remedy must be found elsewhere; that the success of the co-operative system at Leeds, Rochdale, and Derby, opened up for labour a peaceful perspective, far preferable to what can be opened to it by these insensate conflicts in which germinate so many hateful passions, and in which victory so closely resembles a suicide. He grasped my hand, and we separated.

On the following day I heard that a deputation, representing not fewer than 5000 workmen, had been received at the House of Commons by Sir George Lewis, Secretary of State for War, and that Mr. Potter having exposed the injustice of the intervention of Government in the affair of the Chelsea Barracks, Sir George had uttered these remarkable words: "If the Government has, without intending it, violated the laws of a desirable neutrality, I regret it." He promised that the question should be carefully examined, and that justice should be done to all. It is all the deputation asked for. The delegates retired, after gratefully thanking the Minister, and it is nearly certain that, public opinion having also spoken out, the Government will retrace its steps.

Such facts are full of instruction. In this country, reason has always a chance of winning, because it has always the liberty of proving.

LETTER XXII.

DEATH OF LORD HERBERT.

August 15th, 1861.

EXCELLENT Lord Herbert! I still seem to see him with his tall figure, his sickly appearance, and his manners so completely revealing the English gentleman! I read the other day, I forget where, that Lord Herbert's arguments as a debater were like silken cords which gently wound themselves round the judgment of his hearers, and led them captive. It was a very just appreciation. Lord Herbert was not, perhaps, an orator of the first order. He had not the dazzling and subtle eloquence of Mr. Gladstone, nor that bitter talent for invective and irony which has made the parliamentary fortune of Mr. Disraeli, nor the power and passion of John Bright. But he exercised over his audience the influence of a cultivated mind, of straightforward reasoning, and of a clear intelligence, assisted by an able exposition of argument. As a statesman he was evidently made for aspiring, sooner or later, to the honours of the Premiership.

The follower and admirer of Sir Robert Peel, like him he allowed himself to be converted to the doctrine of Free Trade, and like him he became alienated from Conservatism, his first love. He was Secretary-at-War at the time of the Crimean expedition. A terrible ordeal, in which his reputation was well-nigh wrecked! Who has forgotten the explosion of wrath excited by the disasters for which the English army was indebted to the vices of the military administration? These vices were of ancient date; but, as it frequently happens, public opinion made the present responsible for the faults of the past. Mr. Sidney Herbert (he was not a lord at that time) fell from power, together with his colleagues; and when the triumph of the Whigs brought him back in 1859, it required nothing less than the extraordinary ability which he displayed as War Minister to cancel the sentence of political condemnation previously passed upon him. His passage to power will mark an epoch in the military annals of the English, for it was signalised by three events of superior importance—the organisation of the Volunteers, the adoption of the Armstrong gun, and the amalgamation of the Indian with the royal army. On Friday last, his mortal remains were deposited in the new church at Wilton, near Salisbury. There were present at the scene of the last adieu, the Duke of Newcastle, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir James Graham, the Earl de Grey and Ripon, Lord Clyde, and several other personages of distinction, among whom was pointed out Miss Nightingale, whom the Crimean War rendered so celebrated among all Sisters of Charity.

LETTER XXIII.

EXAMPLE OF PROTESTANT INTOLERANCE.

August 15th, 1861.

DEATH "has also carried off quite recently the Duke of Buckingham, and, no further back than last Friday, Henry Montague Villiers, brother of Lord Clarendon, and Bishop of Durham. The latter was a prelate who had achieved popularity through charity. Little gifted with eloquence, he had the good sense to acknowledge it to himself, and the good taste to let it be known to others. In the pulpit, he did not preach so much as converse. He belonged to the Evangelical section. His mode of interpreting the Scriptures was almost minutely literal, and criticism was entirely absent from his sermons.

Happy the theologians of the *Essays and Reviews* had they resembled him in this respect ! I have already related to you how the thunderbolt was suspended over their heads: it has at last fallen upon one of them, the Rev. Rowland Williams. In his triennial visit, the Bishop of Salisbury explained to the clergy of his diocese that he had hesitated awhile before instituting proceedings against the audacious commentator of Bunsen's writings, for three reasons: 1st, because he did not think that the *Essays and Reviews* were of a nature to exercise a permanent influence upon men's minds; 2ndly, because he feared that legal proceedings might tend to increase this influence; and, 3rdly, because he was under some apprehension lest he should be carried away by his indignation beyond the bounds of charity and justice, at the sight of the efforts attempted with a view to shake the great edifice of Christianity.

If such were the motives which made the Bishop of Salisbury hesitate, it is to be regretted that they were not powerful enough to induce him to renounce a foolish persecution. It is certain that the *Essays and Reviews* have been indebted for their nine editions to the anathemas of the Church; and we may be allowed to question the sentiments of charity and justice which animate the Bishop of Salisbury, when he denounces, as directed

against Christianity, efforts the manifest object of which is to distinguish in the Bible between the spirit and the letter, and to discover in it a sense that may disarm criticism.

Now, mark the contagion of intolerance! While the Bishop of Salisbury is thundering against the Rev. Rowland Williams, the Methodist Conference accuses of black heresy, and condemns to retractation within a brief delay, one of its members who has been guilty of believing in the natural transmission of moral purity. Is not that a mighty great crime in the nineteenth century? After all, one does not see why those who admit the transmission of sin, should not admit the transmission of moral purity. If to regenerate the father was enough to regenerate his offspring, that would really be an advantage, nor is there anything in that to be angry about.

I have just said that intolerance is contagious: here is another case in point. At Devonport, a Mr. Bradlaugh, suspected of being slightly sceptical, had been urged by his friends to explain his views on the Sunday. As they had no chapel, nor even a hall, to place at his disposal, they hired a field. Mr. Bradlaugh arrives, but at the moment when he is about to open his mouth, the superintendent of police comes up, and in a fit of orthodox fury makes his way direct to the preacher, seizes him by the collar, and drags him off to prison.

I need hardly add that an action for illegal imprisonment has been instituted by Mr. Bradlaugh against the too zealous superintendent of police. But to what do you suppose the Exeter jury condemned the latter? To the payment of a farthing damages; yes, one farthing! If juries were often to return such verdicts, it would be better to dispense with the blessings of such an institution. And if policemen, not satisfied with deciding on matters of faith, have the power to arrest folks after this fashion, to prevent them from making theological blunders, they deserve the honours of the priesthood, and I should propose to confer holy orders on those whom in France you call *sergents de ville*!

Happily, facts of this kind are rare, and are reproved by public opinion. For all that, Protestant England—the avowal pains me—needs to be warned on that head. Let the Protestants look to it! Their cause is bound up with the liberty of

conscience and with every form of liberty by a glorious compact, but one as inviolable as it is glorious. It is forbidden to them to break it, under pain of suicide. It is forbidden to them to stifle conscience and thought, under pain of effacing one of their most characteristic attributes. Let them look to it! Catholicism is there, watching the blunders of its adversaries.

It is all very well to repel, with loud outcries, the yoke of the Catholic hierarchy; to denounce, at the first indication of peril, the encroaching habits of Rome; to make head against Cardinal Wiseman; to drag through the streets, and treat with ridicule, and burn at certain periods, by the hands of the London boys, the grotesque and odious effigy of Guy Fawkes; but all that has not hitherto prevented Rome from opening out for herself across the country of Cromwell a pathway that every day goes on widening in the dark,—all that has not checked the progress of the Puseyites, the advanced guard of that army of deserters whom Mr. Newman has led away towards the Vatican. For the Protestants, the true method of combating Rome, is to remain faithful to their principle, the freedom of search; to represent against her the power, in virtue of which the human mind becomes developed; to advance towards new horizons more and more luminous; and to have always present to the mind the powerful words of Munzer: “It is not enough to be incessantly crying aloud, ‘Faith! Faith!’ or to fill enormous volumes with that word. To have faith, is to work for the emancipation of the earth!”

LETTER XXIV.

WHEN LONDON IS A DESERT.

August 18th, 1861.

Town is dying! Town is dead! Farewell to Parliament and the Opera! Farewell to the splendours of the West End, the brilliant cavalcades of Rotten Row, and the handsome equipages that take such pleasure in crowding upon each other

along the bank of the Serpentine in Hyde Park! London is touring it. London is at the seaside—at Brighton, at Spa, at Loch Katrine, in Switzerland, in Italy, on the railroads, everywhere but in London. Lord Palmerston is enjoying the aurora of his vacation at Walmer Castle, in the county of Kent. Lord Granville, whose duty it is to accompany the Queen to the Lakes of Killarney, leaves London to-day, I believe. Is it for the sake of being singular that the Duke of Somerset has not yet taken his departure, though all the other members of the Cabinet have spread their wings for a flight? No; never did the city of the fairy tales that was turned into stone wear the desolate aspect presented by Belgravia. This is the moment even for those whose evil star nails them to the spot to fasten their doors, close their shutters, and turn literally their house into a tomb. What if one were to fancy that they had not gone out of town! Not gone out of town, in the month of August! For shame!

Ask the last of those *merveilleux de contrebande*, who here form the interesting class of "swells," if he would have courage enough to venture into the street? He would rather live in his cellar. The very lawyers feel that it is a point of honour to run away. Off, off with you, good people! Go and be treated by the hotel-keepers as you treat your clients, and learn what it is to have another man's hand in one's pocket!

Needless to add, that, previous to separating from one another, the Ministers have had the famous Whitebait dinner at Greenwich—that characteristic dinner at which every dish is a present from the marine deities.

Aimez-vous le poisson? On en a mis partout.

The Whitebait dinner, as you are doubtless aware, is an indispensable ceremony with Ministers at the end of the session; but what, perhaps, you do not know, is the origin of this custom. In reference to this I will tell you a story as it was told me. Once upon a time there was, not a queen, but a certain Sir Robert Preston, who possessed in the county of Essex a fishing-box, where he was accustomed to seek refuge from the annoyances of parliamentary life. His usual guest was George Rose, Secretary to the Treasury, and, like himself, one of the brethren of Trinity House. One day the latter having exclaimed, "Oh, how Pitt would enjoy the comfort of this retreat!" Pitt was invited by Sir Robert, and

heartily welcomed. A large number of fish were devoured, and a prodigious quantity of wine consumed, Pitt, who was one of the hardest drinkers of his day, having the good luck to find himself in the company of men who were able to hold their own against him. The following year the thing was repeated; and Pitt took such a fancy to it, that the fish dinner at Sir Robert Preston's assumed the grand aspect of a periodical solemnity. But the distance to be traversed was inconvenient for the Prime Minister; for the art had not then been invented of suppressing journeys and leaving only the departure and the arrival. It was therefore agreed between our three friends that the rendezvous for the dinner should be fixed for the future at Greenwich. Soon afterwards, Pitt asked permission to bring Lord Camden, and it was now done by four what had originally been done by two. Only, Lord Camden having insisted that Sir Robert Preston should be released from the expense, since, after all, it was a tavern dinner, it was resolved, after a long discussion, that each should pay his own share of the bill, poor Sir Robert retaining no more of his ancient glory than the honour of sending out the invitations, and the right of providing a hamper of champagne. Gradually the number of guests recruited from the ministerial bench increased, and finally became complete, so that, when Sir Robert died, he left behind him something like an institution.

This, at least, is certain, that the Ministerial Whitebait dinner having come off, the season in England is over, and the capital will decidedly not return to life until another spring restores to us the leaves and flowers we are about to lose. For it is one of the apparent singularities of this people, that they dwell in the country in the season of frost and snow, and that they abandon it precisely when it is becoming verdant, smiling, and adorable. It is true that it is only the rich who indulge in this absurdity, and on their part it is more easily explained than one might suppose at first sight. Are they not armed against the cold from head to foot? Has not my lady in the country all the comforts of a stately mansion, while my lord has his hounds or his gun?

Besides, when leaves and flowers return, my lord and my lady do not positively turn their back upon them in coming to Town. The innumerable gardens inclosed in London, the squares

lavished upon it, the immense parks embraced within its limits—all this, without being actually the country, seems at least to keep it in remembrance, and partially absolves the English from the crime of divorcing themselves from it.

I will go further, and will maintain, though I should be accused of running after paradoxes, that the inhabitants of London have a weakness for the country. Yes; the city of bankers, of shopkeepers, of money-making people, is, taking it all in all, a city with pastoral predilections, with idyllic tendencies. It has parks that resemble meadows. It loves to see, stretching out between streets full of noise and movement, large open spaces in which sheep browse and cattle graze. Do you see—I am not speaking of the City—that blind alley, so dark and dirty? Arm yourself with courage, and penetrate into it. I lay a wager that in the windows of those hovels, where poverty dwells, you will find pots of flowers.

But the City! Ah, I must acknowledge that the city of London is Town in all its feverish agitation—all its power, all its prolific activity, all its horror. But observe, those who have their offices in it do not care to have their houses there also. One may be “a man of business” there while reserving to oneself to be “a man” elsewhere. One may make money in it, without having any wish to live in it. It is the custom therefore to have somewhere in the suburbs of London a rural retreat containing the domestic hearth, from which one starts in the morning to return to it in the evening, safe to lose two, three, or even four hours a day in travelling by railway. I know some City merchants who live at Brighton, a town eighty kilomètres from London! Still England is the country that invented the definition, “Time is money!”

I have said that London is a desert at this moment. What! Is there no such thing as the London of working men, clerks, small shopkeepers, and penniless men of letters! Alas! alas! this London is at this moment as densely peopled as ever. But this London is counted as nothing by those who are fortunate in this world’s goods. Is it just? If it be true that “all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy,” why should not that be equally true of him who built your mansion as of yourself, my lord?

But, in our turn, let us, too, be just. Among these great

men, these wealthy capitalists, these titled lords, there are hard workers likewise, and who have the more merit in not taking a holiday, as that depends entirely upon themselves.

LETTER XXV.

ENGLAND ABOVE ALL.

August 25th, 1861.

MR. ROEBUCK has just delivered a speech at Sheffield of a nature to produce the most lively sensation here, because of a passage which suggests observations of an extreme importance, and upon which I must trouble you with a few remarks. Here is the passage in question :—

“ I have a secret to make known. I know that there exists between the King of Italy and the Emperor of the French a compact in virtue of which the latter is to have Sardinia as soon as he has withdrawn his troops from Rome. . I am not telling you what I ^{think}, but what I know; and what I also know is, that the people of England will not permit that. War is hanging over your heads; the man who directs affairs in this country being ready to combat any such act of aggrandizement on the part of France. A few months more, and you will see the verification of what I now announce to you. Such is our situation with respect to France; and, such being the case, are we not bidden to look abroad? For what would be our means of defence against the Emperor Napoleon, were he to make the Mediterranean a French lake? ”

Such words are sure to go straight to the heart of every Englishman. And Mr. Roebuck knew it well.

I think I have already told you that this fierce Radical having some time ago paid a visit to Austria, had returned from it with the soul of an Austrian.

To listen to him, the Austrian Government has to this very day been calumniated. Men have chosen not to understand its true nature, its real tendencies. It is, at bottom, paternal, generous, and liberal. It asks for nothing better than to

model itself after the government of England. Wait a little, and you will see how far Austria can go in the path of progress. The Hungarians who worry it are ingrates. The English Liberals who attack it are boobies. Has not the Emperor of Austria given sufficiently clear proofs of his conversion to constitutionalism? Has he not created a House of Commons? Has he not created a House of Lords? What more do you want? After this fashion Mr. Roebuck has set himself to speak, and, as if to help his propagandism, the Archduke Maximilian of Austria one fine day disembarked at Southampton, the worthy mayor of which welcomed him as he had formerly welcomed Louis Kossuth. There the Archduke received, in his triple capacity of prince, sailor, and Liberal, an ovation that comprised the roaring of cannon, and the displaying of flags, and the braying of trumpets—in fact, everything that caresses human pride, while deceiving it—everything that human folly is ever eager to accord.

But, in spite of all that, the popularity of Mr. Roebuck ran great risk of perishing in the wreck of his former opinions, had he not bethought him of an expedient, the success of which was not doubtful.

Mr. Roebuck is a man of intellect, and not nearly such a *Paysan du Danube* as he appears. No one, assuredly, is more haughty in his bearing, more bilious in his patriotism, more aggressive in his habits, more harsh in his speech; but, as it happens in natures at once intelligent and powerful, much penetration and subtness are concealed beneath that rough exterior. Mr. Roebuck, who is English in blood and bones, for that very reason is perfectly acquainted with the malady of the English, the worm that gnaws them, the demon that tears them, the phantom that possesses them; and from this knowledge he derives the means of rendering, if I may say so, his actual unpopularity popular. He cries aloud everywhere at the top of his voice: "O my fellow-citizens! learn to love Austria; draw closely to Austria; ally yourselves to Austria, for she will save you from France!"

Mr. Roebuck was certain beforehand that such language would be applauded, and that is why he revealed to the electors of Sheffield his famous *secret*.

What truth there may be in this cession of Sardinia, the imminence of which Mr. Roebuck proclaims with so much

assurance, I know not; but what I do know is, that the announcement of an eventuality of this kind is calculated more than anything else to make the national fibre vibrate throughout England. *The Mediterranean a French lake!* These are words that have for every Englishman the reverberation of the tocsin.

Consequently, when Mr. Roebuck spoke of the forthcoming cession of Sardinia to France, a cry arose,—a cry that issued from the very heart of England: “*Shame! Shame!*”.

I cannot say, however, that I believe in the warlike determination attributed by Mr. Roebuck to Lord Palmerston under the given circumstances. No; the wind here is not from the war quarter. England, at this moment, has more need of prudence than of pride; and the Volunteer Movement, which might be a very serious affair if England had to defend herself, will never be any encouragement to her to assume the offensive. I remember that Beranger one day, while speaking to me of those who, without his knowledge and contrary to his wishes, had started a national subscription in his favour with a loud flourish of trumpets, remarked, with that singularly subtile wit which characterised him: “When the drummer beats beneath your window, you fancy he is beating for you. Well, very often he is only beating for himself; it amuses him!” The drummer of the Volunteers, so long as there is a possibility of preserving peace even at the cost of great sacrifices, very closely resembles Beranger’s drummer—he beats for himself—it amuses him.

If then, the fact announced with such knitting of the brows by Mr. Roebuck were to be realised, I have the firmest conviction that no one would ever dream of making it a *casus belli*. But from one end of the United Kingdom to the other, public opinion would burst forth in menaces, would pour itself forth in invectives, would denounce to the entire universe the duplicity of French policy, and would never weary of dwelling upon the immorality and injustice of France.

Ah! the maxim is as applicable to nations as to individuals, that “such a one does not see a beam in his own eye who sees a straw in his neighbour’s eye.” Eh! Great Heavens! what policy has less troubled itself than that of England about the exigencies of justice when the national interests were concerned? In what nation of the world has cupidity displayed

its vulture wings more widely than in England? If it is true that England can lay claim to some or the noblest pages of history; if it is true that to her belongs the immortal honour of being the classic land of liberty, and that her laws, even under the yoke of an aristocracy, have rendered admirable testimonies to the dignity of human nature, and that from her breast arose the most potent cry that has ever been uttered against sacerdotal tyranny, and that even now she is the only country which political conflicts have not made inhospitable;—is it not equally true that in her eagerness to subdue the seas, to extend her influence, and to conquer new markets for her products, she has rarely obeyed the voice of principle? Shall I again repeat that, when in 1857 Mr. Gladstone, with the nine or ten Peelites who voted in his train, Lord John Russell, and that trinity, Cobden, Bright, and Milner Gibson, succeeded in vanquishing Lord Palmerston in the House of Commons, by reproaching him with having adopted, as regards the Chinese, the reasoning of the courtiers of the lion in the fable, Lord Palmerston, to repair his defeat, and turn the tables upon his conquerors in Parliament, had only to drag them before the tribunal of the electors and to put the question in these terms: "Have I, or have I not, acted for the interests of England?"

I shall never forget what passed at those elections, sadly famous, I shall never forget with what severity such men as Gladstone, Bright, Cobden, and Milner Gibson were punished for the crime of having thought that there was something higher than the interests of England, and that that something was justice. I shall never forget those words of a Palmerstonian candidate to his assembled constituents: "I decline to anatomise the nature of our quarrel with China. Whether we are wrong, or whether we are right, is quite the same to me. All that I know is, that our national honour and our national interests require that if we have begun by being unjust, we should go on with being unjust."

In quoting this incredible speech, I have no wish in any way to call in question the private morality of the orator, with whom I am not personally acquainted, but whose name is known to me. It is very possible that in his private life he may be strictly just, may go regularly to church, and make his servants go likewise. But, I must say, so are the English

made. Their grand axiom—there are exceptions, and the debate to which I have alluded shows it—is, that “England can do no wrong,” no more than a king according to the constitutional theory. Hence, in almost every one of the constituent members of English society, a very curious sort of dualism. Take an English gentleman; he is the best of men. Penetrate into the recesses of his nature, and you will love him. You will find him, beneath a reserved exterior, endowed with much feeling. He will charm you by the sincerity of his character, the solidity of his attachments, and his unostentatious generosity. That justice in small matters which constitutes the security of mutual relations, you may regard it as certain you will have to admire in him. But let an event occur by which the material welfare of England is compromised, you will be surprised to see your friend apply to the conduct of his country principles quite different from those which serve to regulate his own actions. This man of sense and feeling will not allow that any one should dispute England’s right to be inexorable. This just man will openly before your very eyes bow down to the god of might.

In pointing out to you in this manner the existence of two distinct persons in one being, the *man* and the *Englishman*, I do not draw my conclusion from any individual instance, nor do I at all exaggerate. What I here state is the result of a long and impartial observation. I readily admit that the doctrine of the Palmerstonian candidate mentioned above is not reduced to a formula in the consciences of the majority of his fellow-countrymen with such appalling precision; but it answers to an instinct which is not the less potent for not being always defined, and which furnishes a lever of great power to unscrupulous statesmen who know how to handle it.

Superfluous, after this, to remark that a people predisposed to regard as just whatever is to its advantage will also naturally be predisposed to regard as unjust whatever is prejudicial to itself. Hence the ingenuous cry, every time that France enlarges the sphere of her action: “*Shame! Shame!*”

Now, what are we to conclude from the preceding? That the English are an untractable nation, and that it would be desirable to do away with them? God forbid! Such a conclusion would be insensate, and worse than insensate. Were it possible, which happily it is not, that England should be

erased from the map, a void would be created in the world which, to the irreparable detriment of France herself, could never be filled up. The alliance of the two peoples, a sincere alliance, is not only a national necessity for one and for the other, but it is also a question of European civilisation ; for if civilisation has sometimes need of the spur, it also sometimes needs to be held in. If France is the spur, England is the bridle, and it will never do for the horse to run away with its rider.

This, then, is the conclusion to adopt : Since, on the one hand, the alliance of France and England is of inestimable value ; and on the other, England is excessively suspicious, wisdom demands, not that France should systematically and cowardly yield to her susceptibilities, but that she should become acquainted with them and make allowance for them, and should study, so far as is reasonable, to humour them. The day that the English cease to distrust France will be a great day for the world !

But when will that happy moment arrive ? It will arrive when public opinion in France shall have recovered her voice, and when that voice shall make itself heard without constraint ; when our policy, being—as it is the case here (thanks to public discussion)—covered with no veil, England will be placed in a condition to regulate her feelings with regard to us by a clear appreciation of our intentions, ideas, and projects. Under the present system, the English are afraid of everything, because they are kept in ignorance of everything. Every night, they lie down to rest without being quite certain that they will not suddenly be roused by the roar of cannon, because, in fact, the morrow depends upon decisions which, not falling under daily criticism, remain unknown and hold the world in suspense.

There is in that a great misfortune, a very great misfortune, for France, for England, for Europe, and, I will add without hesitation, for the French Government itself, which is thus exposed to all sorts of erroneous suppositions, offensive interpretations, and unjust suspicions.

No, so long as the system to which France is at present subjected is not sufficiently open, let it not be hoped that the English will be brought to have confidence in us. So long as the light of day does not shine in France, they will consider—

and it is a thing that cannot be too deeply regretted—their alliance with us as an unnatural marriage between publicity and silence, between light and darkness, and they will always fear that they are playing the part of dupes.

There can be no thoroughly sincere, no thoroughly frank and durable alliance except between free England and France restored to freedom.

LETTER XXVI.

LORD PALMERSTON AS LORD WARDEN OF THE CINQUE PORTS.

September 2nd, 1861.

THE great event of this week has been the installation of Lord Palmerston as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. What does that mean? many of your readers will doubtless inquire. Here is the history in a few words:—

Hastings, Dover, Sandwich, Hythe, and Romney are five ports to which it was natural that their situation on the shores of the counties of Kent and Sussex should give a particular importance at the time of the ensanguined rivalries of France and England.

Hence the idea of placing them under the special jurisdiction of a Warden—an idea that dates from William the Conqueror! Not an institution this of yesterday, as you perceive.

Then came John Lackland, who, having slain his nephew to rob him of his crown, was condemned for this crime as a felon by the Court of Peers of France, and despoiled of the fiefs he possessed amongst us. To recover Normandy, which he had lost in this manner, would have given him great pleasure, but for that he required ships, and he had scarcely any. He therefore offered considerable advantages to Hastings, Dover, Sandwich, Hythe, and Romney, if these ports would undertake to provide him for forty days at a time, as often as he might want them, fifty-seven ships manned by sufficient crews. The bargain was struck. Dover supplied twenty-one ships, Hastings the same number, while Sandwich, Hythe, and Romney between them furnished fifteen. The "cinque

ports" were in consequence invested with divers privileges, among which was this, that each of the five ports should be entitled to send two barons to Parliament. It was also ordained that their representatives should carry the canopy at royal coronations, that they should sit on the king's right hand at the banquet, and should never be called upon to pay imposts, taxes, or tolls.

But Dover, Hastings, Sandwich, Hythe, and Romney have seen their days of glory pass away. What power dare hope to escape the trenchant scythe of the inevitable revolutionist, Time? The office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports which had come down to being only a fat sinecure of 3000*l.* a year, is now-a-days not even that. It is the least enviable of sinecures, a sinecure without emolument—nothing but a sinecure.

It was not precisely that at the time of Pitt, to whom the honour of being nominated Governor of the Five Ports was worth an annual increase of 3000*l.*, which he accepted as a gift from heaven; for—must I confess it?—the illustrious Pitt had something in him of a sieve. From his disinterestedness, combined with his poverty and want of order, it resulted that, after his death, the nation had to pay his debts, which amounted to an enormous sum; and which, be it said, it paid without a frown—for England never keeps an account against those who serve her. So it is, however, that Pitt, while he disturbed the affairs of the world as much as he could, allowed the affairs of his own household to go so completely to wreck, that a wealthy merchant of his acquaintance having undertaken to replace them on a good footing, recoiled with affright at the sight of the fabulous accounts which were presented to him by the baker, the grocer, the butcher—so much so, that in despair he left the son of Chatham and his expenditure where he had found them.

The post of Governor of the Cinque Ports had this advantage a hundred years ago, that at least it offered a resource to statesmen who could not keep their private accounts. But at the present day?

Can you fancy a serious and self-respecting man, starting off by rail, to have an imaginary dignity conferred upon himself by imaginary seneschals and barons, in an imaginary world? Does not this congress of shadows recall to you the verses of Scarron:—

"J'aperçus l'ombre d'un cocher,
Qui, tenant l'ombre d'une brosse,
En frottait l'ombre d'un carrosse!"

And do you picture to yourself the Premier of England donning one fine day a blue coat with a red collar, the costume of the Constables of Dover Castle, which differs but little from that of the postmen here, with the firm resolution of going to seat himself upon a farce of a throne, to receive the homage of I know not what fictitious authorities! Lord Palmerston being a clever fellow after all, what roars of laughter he must have excited at night, after returning home, in the circle of his family and friends, at the strange things which, on Wednesday night, he saw, said, and heard! How he must have ridiculed, behind closed doors, the masquerade of which he had consented to be the hero, and the comical gravity of the worthy notables who fancy themselves important personages for having played at the Middle Ages.

But why, then, you will ask, did he lend himself to such a parade? Could he not live without being Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports? If that surprises you, it is because you do not know Lord Palmerston, the gayest companion, the most affable guest, the most jovial statesman that ever existed. It is enough to look at him. How spruce and flaunting is this man who was Secretary of War in 1809, this man who has traversed, with a constant smile, seventy-seven winters! Power, in general such a heavy burden to bear, weighs upon him no more than the wren upon the oak in the fable. He loves moving to and fro, public dinners, and official diversions. He is not even put out by being bored, when necessary, with the company of municipal mediocrities; and if he is then bored, as I suspect, it is with the best grace in the world.

Indeed, why should he have refused to those worthy people down there the satisfaction of saluting him as Lord Warden? Thanks to the wealth of good-nature which is treasured in his heart, Dover has had an opportunity of putting on its gala dress. The Volunteers of the place have had an excuse for showing themselves off to the ladies in all the splendour of their military toilette. There was an immense concourse of the curious, a good dinner, some amusement, and the local authorities were charmed with the Premier whilst en-

chanted with themselves. And it cost Lord Palmerston—what? to listen to some mawkish toasts, to which he is accustomed, and to deliver one in which he told his hearers, in confidence, that they were the first nation under the sun. All that is not very hard to bear; and were it much more so than it is, it was certainly not worth while, for the sake of avoiding a little trouble, that Lord Palmerston should compromise his character of being a good fellow.

The less so, that therein, perhaps, lies part of the secret of his popularity, and of the singular persistency with which the Liberals of this country have sought to claim him as one of themselves, in spite of his own efforts to convince them of the contrary. What was the motive that, in the month of December, 1851, caused him to retire from the Whig Ministry presided over by Lord John Russell—his eagerness to applaud with both hands the coup d'état which engendered the empire? And what was the motive which, at a later date, induced him suddenly to abandon the cabinet to which he was again attached? His repugnance to adhere to the project of a Parliamentary Reform.

The truth is, he has a horror of whatever, more or less, resembles an organic change. Oh! let them occupy themselves with sanitary experiments, let them study the means of purifying the air, let them seek out processes for disinfecting the Thames, far be it from him to object. These kinds of reform are, on the contrary, quite to his taste, and distrustful persons—of whom I am one—are disposed to think that they please him precisely because he deems them likely to cause more decisive reforms to be lost sight of. Lord Palmerston, it is well to remember, commenced his political career under the ministries of Mr. Perceval and Lord Liverpool. He could not have been at a better school to become a Tory, and he has since well proved that he profited by the lessons of his teachers. A Tory, and, what is worse, a Tory of the old school, Lord Palmerston is, as much as Canning was during the first half of his life. There is a saying attributed to him which is characteristic. It was, I think, in 1852, that he said: "The age in which we live is an age of progress, but not of reforms." This is very much what he repeated at Dover. No matter. They will have it, that he is a Liberal. We must, therefore, make the most of it, and content our-

selves, for want of something better, with this explanation ; how could Lord Palmerston be otherwise than a Liberal Minister ? he is such a good fellow !

In any case, one thing is certain : England can never have a minister who will better respond to her instincts, or be more capable of representing her policy abroad. Did you remark with what a display of skilful patriotic pride he stated at the Dover Banquet, that out of 150,000 Volunteers there were nearly 40,000 who were now in a condition to march side by side with troops of the line ? And how strongly he insisted on the glorious features of this Volunteer movement ? And how warmly he was applauded when he pronounced the following words : " We accept frankly the right hand of friendship when it is held out to us, nor do we reject it distrustfully even when we see the left hand grasp the hilt of the sword ; but when things stand thus, to throw away our buckler would be the height of folly ! "

Better than any one, Lord Palmerston knows what is the meaning of speech. Accustomed to the reticences of diplomatic language, and a perfect master of the art of not expressing what it is important to keep quiet, he is not the man to bid for applause, *entre la poire et le fromage*, by unseasonable menaces and vain rodomontades. You may see, then, in his speech, the certain proof of that profound distrust which the English cherish with regard to France. This distrust I dwelt upon in my last letter ; it is easy for you now to judge if my appreciation was well founded.

LETTER XXVII.

THE QUEEN.

September 3rd, 1861.

AMONG the events worthy of note in the week that has just concluded, the Queen's visit to Ireland may be placed by the side of Lord Palmerston's installation as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. A circumstantial report of Victoria's tour in the country of O'Connell, would take me far. Besides, I have

little taste, I confess it, for the rôle of a Dangeau. It has always seemed to me unworthy of a soul that respected itself to keep a journal of the thousand little incidents which prove that you and I and the mortal gods called princes are, after all, of the same species. If the curiosity of a certain portion of the public demands to run along by the side of the carriages; to follow, stage by stage, majesty in motion; to prowl round the royal kitchen, to sniff up the savour of the dishes; so much the worse for it! Paid historians are not worth the money they get. There may be those who are so constituted as to attach an extreme importance to the mode in which a Queen uses a handkerchief or a fan. For my part, I am one of those who do not perceive this importance, and I cannot admit that it is given to the most powerful to shake the earth when they sneeze. In this habit of piously embalming the smallest incidents that are connected with the life of such or such personages, I can only see a cynical appeal to the degradation of character, and I feel convinced that whatever is thus accorded to the deification of a few is filched from the dignity of all.

But what I very gladly state in réference to Queen Victoria's "progress" is, that wherever she has passed she has encountered the most lively enthusiasm; and I am pleased to make the statement, because in England the demonstrations of enthusiasm are necessarily sincere, on account of the liberty that reigns there. If people praise you when it is optional with every one to blame you, how can you call in question the value of the homage? Liberty alone confers upon popular manifestations the character which renders them useful to study. Alone it endows them with a profound sense. Alone it makes them reliable indications for the researches of history and the judgment of posterity.

Queen Victoria is beloved in this country for the virtues which she indisputably possesses. It is known that she is attached to her husband, a good mother, and clever in the management of her household, all qualities highly prized by the English. Montaigne says somewhere: "Selon que l'expérience m'en a appris, je requiers d'une femme mariée, au dessus de toute autre vertu, la vertu économie. Je veois avec despit, en plusieurs mesnages, monsieur revenir maussade et tout marmiteux du fracas des affaires, environ midi, que

madame est encore aprez à se coiffer et attifer en son cabinet ; c'est à faire aux roynes, encore ne scais-ie." The English are in this of Montaigne's opinion, except that where he seems to hesitate, they affirm. They do not say : "encore ne scais-ie," they take it for certain that a queen should not only have all the domestic virtues becoming to her sex, but should propose to herself the merit of setting the example of them. This is why they love Queen Victoria, and respect her.

I have often asked myself what would have happened if chance had placed upon this throne, on which it may be said that Victoria studies not to be seen, a woman of Elizabeth's genius, or of the character of Catherine of Russia ? Either I am greatly mistaken, or the institutions of England, as they are now-a-days understood and construed, would have had to pass through a severe ordeal. Mediocrity of talent and moderation of temperament in the nominal chief of the State are two conditions without which the value of the constitutional system becomes liable to dispute, and its existence very problematical. Happily for England, these two conditions are realised in Victoria. Her sceptre, in truth, weighs no more than would a distaff. She occupies, without movement, the supreme niche which the constitutional system particularly aims at secreting from the covetousness and strife of ambition. Doing nothing, she takes away from the famous maxim, "Royalty can do no wrong," all that that maxim seems to possess of monstrously conventional. In a word, she honestly earns her right of reigning by dint of not governing.

Besides, she has all the qualities requisite for all that she has to do in public. She reads unexceptionably the speeches from the throne, and the papers never fail to remark how distinct is her pronunciation, how clear her voice, and how just its intonations. What more can be desired ?

Not with equal grace, however, does the Prince Consort resign himself to the honours of an august *far niente*. I have already quoted the saying of a philosopher of the eighteenth century : "What distinguishes man from other animals is his perpetual itching to meddle with what does not concern him." According to this definition, Prince Albert thoroughly understands the dignity [of man in the system of creation ; for the reproach made against him is that he meddles with

things that do not belong to his province, and that he aspires to be more than the husband of the Queen. But as these encroachments of influence take place behind the curtain, they are less alluded to in the papers than in private society. And why should the Queen be held answerable for what is not strictly personal? At the utmost, all that she can fairly be suspected of is a little tolerance; and who is there that cannot understand that in this instance the tolerance of the Queen is explained by the tenderness of the wife?

However, it must not be lost sight of that the royal family is very large, even for a country in which the fecundity of females is a subject of national pride. Nine princes and princesses to provide for at the expense of the public is a good deal! Even if there be no further progress! But who knows?

It is this that occupies the thoughts of the worthy citizens of this matter-of-fact country; and as England has, thank Heaven! free liberty of speech, I remember that at certain elections no scruple was felt in many places in demanding of candidates their opinion relative to the dowry which the gallantry of Ministers was about to propose to Parliament for the betrothed of the Prince Royal of Prussia. I will even tell you in confidence that the tenor of the Royal Marriage Act which condemns the members of the Royal Family to ally themselves matrimonially to German houses, extremely illustrious but excessively poor, is not in general much relished by the public that has to pay, especially when the time for settlement arrives. A little less nobility and a little more money would be preferred.

This will give you the measure of the real monarchical sentiment of our Saxons. To hear them speak, they are not content to admit the monarchical principle, but adore its personification. Take care not to call in question their loyalty, or you will offend them mortally. With what humble complaisance they speak of the Queen's army, of the Queen's Bench, of the Queen's peace! I know nothing that does not here belong to the Queen—on paper. The very word "liberty," our Saxons find a mysterious charm in pronouncing only in association with the idea of subjection, and they speak of "the liberty of the subject," instead of "liberty" only. They carry it to the

point that when, the Queen being seated on her throne, her ministers present to her the speech she has to read before "her faithful Commons," they literally bend the knee. This is as it should be, is it not? But wait a little! What they pretend to adore in the King, or the Queen, is not a man or a woman, but an animated statue. This display of respect, these external marks of boundless veneration, all this humble terminology, are only intended to conceal from royalty the sense of its impotence. What is really popular in it, at bottom, is its neutrality."

To say the Queen's army, the Queen's Bench, the Queen's peace, the liberty of the subject, is a cheap mode of compensating royalty. Monarchy in England is a simple business transaction. How much does it bring in? How much does it cost? Balance of profits and losses.

Observe that I am here only describing, and do not pretend to censure. Nay, more, if I must tell you all I think, I do not find this mode of being monarchical devoid of common sense, though it may seem deficient in poetry. After all, the English cannot have forgotten a past which is only of yesterday. They still remember—and who will blame them for it?—how burdensome to the nation were the irregularities of George IV. and his brother the Duke of York. They still recollect the sacrifices imposed by the payment of their enormous debts, and a penny paper, widely circulated in London, scrupled not the other day to recall the memory of George IV. going to spend his vacation at Brighton with Mrs. Fitzherbert, his mistress, and, when there, being obliged to have recourse to the generosity of one of his attendants for a dinner, such alacrity had this foremost of gentlemen displayed in emptying his purse, that is, the purse of the public! Nor would he, probably, have confined himself to such loans, had he lived at the period at which Shakspeare shows us Prince Hal—afterwards Henry V.—hastening, with his worthless companions, to place himself in ambush, at a turning on the high road, to plunder the passers-by. John Bull is not so wrong then, in such matters and as a general rule, to put his hand upon his pocket.

In reality, what he esteems in the Queen is the care she takes never to go beyond her constitutional rôle; it is her obedience to the principle that limits her power; it is her

respect for the institutions of the country. Thus is a character of nobleness imparted to the expression of the sentiments which her presence inspires. In saluting her as she passes, the English repay her for her submission to the will of the people, and, in fact, uncover themselves only in the presence of liberty.

LETTER XXVIII.

A "DRAWING-ROOM."

IN describing the lofty and philosophical character of the homage which the English, in general, render to royalty, I have not pretended to affirm that the form of this homage has nothing servile about it, at least in outward appearance. For instance, I have some difficulty in reconciling with the manners of a free people the species of idolatrous worship—I speak only as to outward form—to which a "Drawing-Room," as it is called here, gives rise. *

Is there a single man among those who do not possess a carriage, to whom it has not happened, at least once in his life, to await, at the door of a theatre, the evening of an extraordinary performance, under the impression of a pompous advertisement *à la Barnum*, in the midst of a universal paroxysm of curiosity? Woe, thrice woe unto him who finds himself enveloped in the expectant crowd! They trample on his instep, kick against his heels, knock in his ribs; a finger issuing I know not whence, and belonging to I know not whom, is suddenly poked into his eye; if his arms were hanging by his side when the ball of snow first formed around him, his arms will remain for ever glued to his body; if, by accident, he had his arms in the air, behold him con-

* This letter was not written at the period seemingly indicated by the place I have assigned to it,—which I have done because, not relating to any special fact and containing only general observations, there was no occasion to classify it after the order of dates. This remark applies to every letter which the reader will find without a date.

demned for an indefinite time to the fatigue of a tableau-vivant attitude, which will not save him from being flung more dead than alive against the sharp corner of some inevitable barrier as soon as the human billows, at the first creak of the doors, begin to roll.

Well, this fearful ordeal is precisely what had to be endured, no long time ago, in order to enjoy the honours of the "drawing-room," not by robust plebeians, not by youthful Hercules, with wrists of steel and invincible elbows, but by darling angels, all roses and pearls, by slight women robed in beautiful dresses most easily crumpled, by charming creatures with complexions so delicate that one would almost fear to kiss them, if fear were not forbidden when some little enterprise is permitted. Great Heavens! what did it not cost to be allowed to pass before a Queen and make a curtsey!

There was first of all to affront, before the perils of a crowd of people, those of a crowd of carriages. Picture to yourself the torture of a modest young girl imprisoned in a carriage that can neither advance nor retire; and that, in the middle of a street, between two rows of starers, who devour her with their eyes through the carriage windows—herself, her fair hair, her blonde complexion, the ostrich feathers comprising her head-dress, and the long veil fastened with flowers to the back of her graceful neck! It is true that the matrons who had nothing but the richness of their attire to make them conspicuous, ran less risk of attracting the attention of the bystanders; but, with them, I suspect, this was a disappointment.

And now, shall I attempt to describe the scene at alighting and at the entrance! The Queen possesses her Buckingham Palace, which, if it is not very handsome, is at least spacious enough to contain with ease the gilded throng. But no: tradition, so dear to the English, requires that the solemnity of a drawing-room should have for its theatre the palace, the tiny palace of Saint James. There is no help for it. It was idle therefore for critics to point out that the rapid increase of wealth, the growing influence of the middle classes, the more and more subtle calculations of politics, had enlarged the circle of individuals called to the enjoyment of certain social distinctions. It was all to no purpose to prove that the number of gentlemen and ladies imparadised by a Drawing-Room could not be in our days what

it was a hundred years ago. It seemed as if the authorities in such matters were waiting until a man or woman lost his or her life, in which case some step would, perhaps, have been taken to avoid the expenses of a litter. Certain it is, that the fatigues of a campaign were nothing compared with those inflicted upon the sex which has the amiable privilege of being weak, by the straits it was forced to pass through, before reaching the Queen's presence in order to bow to her. For that is the whole affair, except as regards the ladies "presented," who are entitled to the further gratification of kissing the hand of their sovereign.

Be it known to you, moreover, that the apartment in which the Queen remains on this grand occasion, is preceded by two small rooms, one of which is reserved for the diplomatic body, the principal dignitaries of the State, and Dukes, the other being given over to the common herd among the aristocracy. Having arrived so far, as well as they could, the ladies had to remain there standing for Heaven knows how long ! No arm chairs, no chairs of any kind, not even benches. At last came the defiling before the Queen, which in consequence of the very considerable number of privileged visitors, nobility and gentry, has been known to last till four o'clock. So that there was some devotedness on both sides.

This done, you think perhaps that these ladies had only to repose on their laurels. Not at all. They had made good their entrance at the cost of a desperate struggle, and it was at the cost of another desperate struggle that they succeeded in getting out, having for a war-dress a magnificent robe with a train. Fancy ! And then my lady's carriage was not in readiness to receive her. My lady's carriage was in its place in the file, at a distance impossible to ascertain. The horses would come in sight when they could, and in the meantime the best thing was resignation. Needless to add that my lady was perhaps dying of hunger, and that most certainly she was dying of thirst. What ! The Queen has not a glass of water to offer on such a day ! No ; the honour of doing her reverence must stand her faithful subjects in lieu of everything.

I hasten to acknowledge that progress has been manifested in the matter of drawing-rooms as in everything else ; at least as regards the crowding, the love of comfort having

gradually carried the day over the inclination to make proof of a raging loyalty.

I spare you the description of the toilettes. On this head the *Morning Post* will furnish you, if you care to have them, with very precise details. I confine myself to assuring you —but is not that a matter of course?—that in the eyes of the female folk this point is the essential point, here as elsewhere. Worthy recompense for so much trouble! In the evening, these ladies usually exhibit themselves at the theatre. On the morrow, they experience the ineffable satisfaction of reading their names in the *Times*, and the legitimate pride of knowing that the universe will admire the dress that was worn by them. The expenses of a toilette are enormous; but trade does not complain of that. In short, a Drawing-Room is an heroic exhibition of toilettes. It is monarchy placed at the disposal of the milliners.

As I am speaking of the perils and fatigues which for a long time were brought upon the fair sex in England by this great day, a Drawing-Room, I am bound, as a faithful historian, to cite weighty authorities to support my assertions. Happily, I have on my table a collection of *Punch*, and in one of his wittiest numbers I come across a picture of the discomforts of a drawing-room, which is enough to make one shudder.

The Palace of Saint James is represented as defended by various lines of intrenchments, and all kinds of advanced works. The impetuous army of ladies presented or to be presented, has already been hurled against the palace. It inundates the approaches, and beats with close billows against the barriers which the foresight of the Chamberlain has thought fit to oppose to so much ardour. On the right, in a narrow space inclosed between the walls of the palace and a barricade, which the most intrepid have cleared, the advanced-guard of our beauties is being suffocated, and, if the affair lasts but a little longer, will faint away. One enormous lady is treacherously slipping under one of the bars, which constitute the system of defence of the place besieged, and in this perilous position develops certain vulgar details of stoutness, from which aristocratic dignity, alas! does not always act as a preservative. In the centre, a young "miss," her dress defiantly tucked up, leaps across the entrenchments, behind

which are heaped an increasing mob of half-suffocated Amazons. The ground is strewed with feathers, fans, ear-rings, watch-chains, and ribbons. The artist—such discretion does honour to his gallantry—has only slightly indicated the pokes of the elbow and the other material means by the aid of which these ladies have carved out a path for themselves. But to gloss over everything in the matter of pugilism was impossible: the picture would have been wanting in local colouring. Accordingly, in the midst of the crowd is seen an aged sour-looking duchess who, with a tone of voice easily imagined, exclaims, "Eh! it is not my fault. Lady Whitechapel pushed me."

That this state of things is considerably improved, and that Drawing-Room days are not always marked by such tragical adventures, I have already had the honesty to acknowledge. But the picture sketched by *Mr. Punch*, and described above, does not the less remain an historical document worthy to be consulted. I remember that at one of these assaults on the Queen by the ladies of the Court, the dangers of the attack had been so clearly foreseen by the Chamberlain, that he had cunningly devised to arrange in front of the palace a series of obstacles calculated to check the rising tide of the besiegers. But of what is not the desire to make a reverence capable? Young Irish ladies were seen to leap over these insulting entrenchments with an agility and a hardihood that would have made a Zouave jealous. Nevertheless, as it is rare even in the bravest armies that there are not here and there a few poltroons, on this occasion, too, there were certain acts of weakness to be deplored. An English beauty, for instance, might be named who, not venturing to affront the chances of the perilous leap, and not wishing, on the other hand, to remain behind, had reached the top of the barrier by the help of her hands and feet. Suddenly she hears from afar the harsh voice of a plumed and helmeted gentleman cry out to her, "The Chamberlain requests that ladies will not cross the entrenchments." At this terrible cry, the poor Amazon, terrified, loosens her hold and falls back into the arms of her father, an old soldier, who, with military bluntness, exclaimed: "The devil take the Chamberlain!" To which assuredly all those ladies responded, *Amen*.

On the morrow, *Mr. Punch*, in his solicitude, hastened to

publish the following circular, which I translate for the benefit of such of your readers as may desire to form an idea of the style of English humour:

“ Madame de Tournure, directress of the celebrated and fashionable Belgravian establishment, which aims at completing the education of young persons belonging to the higher classes of society, is obliged by the urgency of the crisis to recur to the vulgar expedient of advertising, to make known that she has joined to her Belgravian establishment an academy in which ladies admitted to the honour of appearing before their sovereign will be trained to all the gymnastic exercises which the wish to enjoy that honour requires. The professors whose services have been engaged undertake to put every young person willing to submit to the system adopted in a condition to wrestle with success against the best fed of the lackeys charged with the defence of the approaches to the palace. Madame de Tournure has taken care to imitate in her academy the arrangements of Saint James’s, and her pupils will learn the art of pushing and being pushed, of making way through the crowd, and of arriving before the Queen in a proper state of serenity. There will be walls which young persons destined for the Drawing-Room will accustom themselves to clear. Mattresses will be stretched on the floor, and the ladies anxious to learn the science of jumping, will be, besides, encircled by persons in uniform ready to receive them in their arms. A particular manner of using the elbow has been invented, and will constitute part of the education. To familiarise debutantes with the language and manners of the raging multitude they will have to traverse, Madame de Tournure has engaged a certain number of actors and actresses, who will represent the crowd, in the costumes of generals, bishops, and dowager ladies. To permit literally in the academy the language which is used in the immediate neighbourhood of the palace would not be becoming; but the artists who have been engaged will scold and storm, so as to produce upon the ear, for want of better, the desired effect. There will be dresses to tear to pieces, and ladies will be supplied with cheap jewellery. The price of the course, including gymnastics, jumping, and all *extras*, fifty guineas. Each lady is requested to provide herself with a bottle of smelling salts and a piece of English taffeta.”

Between ourselves, I suspect that *Mr. Punch* exaggerated a little, which is the privilege of his calling and humour. *Castigat ridendo.*

I spoke to you of progress. Let us understand one another. In the olden time it was the etiquette that the lady visitors should range themselves in a circle round the apartments, and await the sovereign, who passed before them, instead of their passing before him. Would not such a mode of reception be preferable to all others? Does not this motionless majesty, in whose presence so many fair and haughty heads go one after the other to lower themselves in silence, somewhat too closely resemble an idol? Such a worship of monarchy is pagan. It tallies ill with the good sense of a people that asks of royalty to do as little as possible, is grateful to it for doing that little, and pays it for doing so much but no more.

A great deal might also be said about the kind of oriental servility betrayed in the fashion of a Drawing-Room, about the habits of luxury which it encourages, about the sentiment of frivolous vanity awakened or maintained in the heart of the women of the aristocracy by the custom which the English press has adopted of quoting their names in its columns, of displaying their titles, and describing their toilettes. But I am preaching on a pathway strewn with ear-rings, bows of ribbons, and fans. I pause, not wishing to embroil myself with your fair readers.

LETTER XXIX.

September 7th, 1861.

MORE tragedies! Permit me to relate them in a few words.

Brighton, as you know, belongs to the gay and flourishing cities of this country. Situated on the shore of the sea, which there shows itself under its most imposing aspect, the town of Brighton boldly faces it on a line that extends beyond eyesight. Pretty houses, hotels sought after by the opulent, resplendent

shops, nothing is wanting to the beauty of the "cliff." It is really a sight to see, the dashing regiments of female cavalry galloping up and down in the afternoon of a fine autumnal day.

Like everything that is powerful or charming, Brighton has its detractors. Some will tell you that the waves instead of coming to caress a beach of fine sand, break upon flints; others, that the sea there is without ships, and the country without trees; others, again, that the Pavilion built by George IV. is a disgrace to architecture: and others—I know not what. One lady of my acquaintance cannot forgive Brighton for the expensive style of dress which one is obliged to adopt there, as if the style of dress worn there were not one of the darling sins of the ladies, and their favourite torment! In general, those who plume themselves on their rural tastes reproach Brighton with being, after all, nothing but *London by the seaside*. A serious accusation that: *London by the seaside!* As if the sea alongside of Regent Street would be a thing so much to be despised!

In spite of all, Brighton is a town of luxury, of pleasure, of fashion. She avenges herself on her detractors by alluring them to her side. People speak evil of her as much as they can, and when the time comes they go to her. It is especially in the mild, dull months, which lead from summer to winter, that Brighton is resplendent, radiant, and on the high road to fortune. It is worth noticing, the affluence of bathers and idlers, male and female, which then swells its population! The hotels are overflowing with visitors. One is obliged to march, purse in hand, to the assault of apartments to let. The pleasure of living becomes a matter of dispute. But for that very reason it is not given to every one to spend two months, or one month, or even a fortnight there; and everybody in London, whether he confesses or denies the fact, has a weakness for Brighton. Poor Lady Morgan, when she was alive, loudly protested her hatred of the sea, which she used to call "a monotonous monster." It is not in that way they speak, I assure you, in the world of warehouse clerks, Strand shop-keepers, chambermaids out of service, and the numerous varieties of the class of Cockneys. For all this world a visit to Brighton has become, since the invention of railways, a weekly necessity. It does so much good to escape from the

heavy atmosphere and smoke of London! Brighton, accordingly, on every Sunday, witnesses the arrival of clouds of birds of passage, third-class travellers who are expected on the morrow in London, to which a "return ticket" will permit them to go back at a trifling expense. Until then Brighton is theirs, theirs only; for—this is a trait of manners which I commend to your notice—the fashionable, and even the unfashionable society of the place would not at any price show themselves in the streets on a Sunday, except to go to church, for fear of being confounded with the awkward squads of cockneydom. It is not good taste on that day to take the air at Brighton!

But the tragedies I announced? Alas! I could wish that I had not to speak of them so soon.

The first occurred, only a few days ago, on the railway from Brighton to London. A train, coming from Portsmouth, had started from Brighton at five minutes past eight in the morning. It reaches the Clayton Tunnel, plunges into it, and finding no obstacle, goes straight on. But almost immediately afterwards, a second train, that started from Brighton at fifteen minutes past eight, is sighted by the man in charge of the signals. Alarmed, he endeavours to give the signal to stop, and, failing to do so, displays a red flag as token of danger. The driver of the second train, which had already reached the entrance of the tunnel, immediately applies himself, with much presence of mind, to manoeuvre in such a manner as to bring his train back. But in consequence of the first impulse given, it could not do otherwise than happen that the backward movement did not begin until the train was completely hidden in the tunnel. The signaller having seen it pass without stopping, imagines that the driver has not observed the red flag, and asks by telegraph of his comrade, placed at the other end of the tunnel, if the passage is clear. The latter, who had seen the first train issue from the tunnel, but not the second, fancies that it was to the former alone that the question referred, and replies that the passage is clear. While this was doing, there appears advancing at great speed a third train, that started from Brighton at half-past eight—and this, a pleasure train! The signalman, deceived by the satisfactory reply he had just received, signals that they may pass on, and the third train, in its turn rushing

into the tunnel, dashes itself in the midst of the darkness against the second one, which was backing out.

What ensued you may conceive. The engine of the third train crushing the last carriage of the preceding train, smashes it into fragments. This carriage was composed of four compartments, each of which enclosed ten travellers. Piercing shrieks arise from all quarters, out of the bosom of the surrounding darkness, shrieks of life struggling with death, and yet more terrible shrieks uttered, not by the flesh but by the heart: "O my father! O my mother! O my child!" And if fresh trains were to pass under that gloomy and accursed vault, completing the work of destruction? Such was the question the survivors put to themselves in the agony of an inexpressible terror that lasted several minutes, that lasted several centuries. When the telegraph had conveyed the disastrous news to Brighton, and when with succour arrived the torches, it was a terrible spectacle, appalling hell itself. Some had their heads crushed; others, their arms or their legs torn from the body; others, again, were burnt to the bones by the scalding water of the overthrown boiler; many were lying buried beneath the fragments of the shattered carriages. Among so many victims uttering lamentable groans, there were twenty-two who remained silent—these were dead.

This is what happened on the 25th of August, and by an inconceivable fatality, on Monday last, at the interval of one week, while hearts were still bleeding from that unexpected stroke, a second catastrophe, more dreadful than the former one, filled the public with consternation. This time, it was on the line which leads from London to the magnificent gardens at Kew, through the quarters of Camden Town and Kentish Town, that the homicidal collision took place. If there existed a god of evil, as the Manicheans supposed, there would really be some reason for believing that this new disaster was the result of a cruel irony on his part. The excursion, which terminated in such a melancholy manner, had been, in fact, got up with a view to augment a fund intended to help such servants of the North of London Railway as might chance to suffer from railway accidents. Does it not look like a merciless raillery of fate?

On Monday last, the visitors to Kew, after a joyous day, were returning to town by their pleasure train, when, not far

from the station at Kentish Town, between seven and eight o'clock in the evening, this train came into collision with nineteen trucks loaded with sand at the very moment it was passing from the down on to the up line. The collision occurring on a bridge, beneath which runs a pathway leading from Carlton Road to Kentish Town, the engine pulverised the obstacle, ran off the rails, with a sort of moaning sound that was heard half a mile off, and leaping over the bridge, rolled down the slope into the fields, followed in its fall by four carriages, some of which were flattened on the ground, while the others remained as if suspended above the first.

The shock had been awful, and there, as on the Brighton line, the spectacle was horrible. I spare you the details—the imagination will paint them only too faithfully. Let it suffice for me to tell you that if the number of dead bodies was somewhat less than at the former catastrophe, the number of wounded appears to have been still more considerable. Thirty-five victims, of whom seven were dead, were removed to the Hospital of University College alone.

For some time past, as I am informed, the disaster had been foreseen, because on the line on which it happened, the transport of materials was continued throughout the day without reference to the number of passenger trains. The very evening of the catastrophe, several persons who were walking in the neighbouring fields had deemed the collision inevitable only a few minutes before it caused so much mourning.

Judge now of the public emotion! It is indescribable. The inquests have commenced; but were they to result in furnishing an exact analysis of the causes which, at so short an interval, have brought about two calamities of this kind, that would not heal the wounded, or restore the dead to life, or dry the mothers' tears.

It is undeniable that, in England, railway accidents are on the increase to a frightful extent. And why? Is it because the establishment of the subordinate officials, being badly paid, is ill composed? Is it because the law, in what concerns loss of life through negligence, is not sufficiently severe, or is not enforced with sufficient severity? It is worthy of remark that the unbridled competition of companies, animated by the ardour of gain and impatience to vanquish, has been

singled out as one of the principal causes, I may say *the* cause, of these repeated disasters, by the two best accredited organs of the doctrine of "let alone"—the *Times* and the *Saturday Review*. The latter journal complains, somewhat vehemently, that more is expected from railways than they can do, and it looks for the cause in the abuse of competition.

There is much truth in this judgment; and what is likewise true is, that as regards means of communication especially, the central administration cannot abdicate, without danger to public interests.

It is with much sympathy that I have seen *Le Temps* attack the excess of centralization, which, in France, is one of the sores of her present condition, and paralyses liberty. I myself wrote, a long time ago:—

"That if political unity is strength, administrative centralization is despotism;

"That there is imminent danger lest the wheels of different interests should be connected in such a manner that, if the motive power be once suspended, the whole machine will be brought to a dead lock;

"That it is absurd to leave the extremities of the body cold, in order to make the blood, which ought to animate them, flow violently back to where its compression threatens to produce suffocation;

"That he would be a strange labourer who, instead of scattering the seed over the whole surface of the field, should take it into his head to pile up the seed on a single point, where the mere fact of its being piled up would prevent its germination;

"That this field is France, this point Paris;

"That it is to the excess of centralization you must address yourself if you wish to know, on one hand, why ignorance is enthroned in our rural districts, why the workshop exists there at the expense of the school, why of so many Communes, formerly powerful and glorious, there are so few that know the history of their belfry; and, on the other hand, why Paris is at one and the same time, an immense light-house lighted up for the benefit of the universe, the tumultuous rendezvous of ambitious intrigues, the theatre of civilization exhausting its deceptions as well as its miracles, and a murderous inclosure in which every one strives to trample upon the body of his

fallen neighbour, because the road is too narrow for the crowd that struggles into it."

It may not be impossible, perchance, that liberty may sometimes gain by its future depending upon a *coup de main* and a *coup de tambour*, but how much more frequently is it exposed to lose thereby! It is offering too tempting a prize to audacity, to give France as the prize for a single conquered city.

True civilization would be that, which, instead of imprisoning France in Paris, should extend Paris, without weakening it, over the whole of France, which should place Paris at the foot of the Alps and the Pyrenees, on the shores of the Mediterranean and the ocean, on the banks of the Rhine, everywhere where French hearts are beating.

Besides, the Commune represents the idea of unity not less really than does the State, though under another aspect. The Commune is the principle of association. The State is the principle of nationality. If the State is the edifice, the Commune is its base. Centralization, pushed to its furthest limits, would tend not only to make France Paris, but to make Paris a fort. Society would be reduced to a garrison.

I trust you will be satisfied with such an explicit profession of faith; but, in return for this, I will ask your permission to establish a distinction which seems to me just and important. To the same degree that I regard decentralization as desirable in what concerns private or local interests, do I esteem it dangerous in what concerns the common interests of society. Suffocation, no; but unity, yes.

Now, in comparing England with France, I observe that the two countries fall into the two opposite extremes.

In France, in addition to a political centralization which has indisputable advantages, we have an administrative and bureaucratic centralization which absorbs everything. In England, decentralization is, more or less, everywhere.

In France, there is a veritable absorption of interests which, by their very nature, demand much liberty of movement and an unshackled vitality. In England one is often obliged to seek in vain, within the sphere of interests manifestly common to all, for both the power that directs and the power that controls.

The regulation of what does not require any regulation is our disease. The letting alone of what, by its very essence,

calls for the employment of social vigilance, is the danger of our neighbours.

The railway companies, for example, which in France are at least under superior inspection, are here unchecked. What results from that, the early part of this letter sufficiently indicates.

I could instance other consequences of the excess to which I refer, and some of them very striking, though, happily, less tragical. There is in London such a parish, the inhabitants of which pay in poor's rates twice as much as such another parish. Whence comes this unjust distribution? Simply from the fact, that each parish, taken separately, is charged with the support of its own poor, so that the parishes the most heavily burdened are precisely those which can the least afford to be so.

LETTER XXX.

A LETTER OF MRS. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

September 15th, 1861.

THERE has been much talk here during the last week about a letter from Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe to Lord Shaftesbury, on the American question.

In this letter, Mrs. Stowe complains with mingled astonishment and bitterness of England's indifference for the cause of the Federalists. The celebrated author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* finds it hard to understand how the English can look with dry eyes and without any beating of the heart upon the mournful phases of a conflict into which, as she affirms, the States of North America flung themselves to liberate the negroes, avenge humanity, and give strength to justice. Is the England of our days the same England that produced Wilberforce? that solemnly, and in the face of the whole world, declared slavery infamous? that courageously abolished it in her own colonies? and that imposed upon herself the duty of tracking out under every flag the dealers in human flesh? This is what Mrs. Stowe asks, and she has some reason to do so. When the touching book came out on this side of the

ocean, in which she denounced to all mothers the right of snatching from a mother her child to offer it for sale, did not a cry of ardent sympathy rise from one end of the United Kingdom to the other? Did not the ladies of England join their signatures at the foot of a letter in which they besought their American sisters to intervene in favour of the poor black women? And what was there wanting to the triumph of Mrs. Stowe on this free land of Great Britain, when she came one day in person to enjoy the sympathies she had awakened in every upright heart?

Nevertheless, England remains a cold spectator of the movements of the Northern States; or rather, to speak more correctly, it is towards the Southern States that she leans. What, then, has come to pass? Is Right a thing that follows the variations of the temperature? Has justice its epochs? and is the appropriation of man by man, according to an expression of Pascal, one of those crimes the origin of which is marked by the entrance of Saturn into Leo?

Before pronouncing judgment upon the attitude of England in this circumstance, it is only fair that we should examine the following question:—Is it really against slavery that the Northern States have taken up arms?

Mrs. Stowe says, yes. But the English reply that her assertions, in this respect, are not of equal weight with those of the Federal Government itself, and that they fall to the ground before the actual facts. For if the war has on the part of the Northern States the “sublime” motive assigned to it by Mrs. Stowe, why has not the Federal Government openly declared it? Why has it made known to all that its sole aim and end is the maintenance of the Union? Why has it shown itself ready, as soon as peace shall be restored, to sanction the pretended right of the master over the slave throughout the States now in revolt? Why has it been proposed in Congress to draw a geographical line, on the other side of which slavery should be recognized as an indispensable institution?

Oh! if the Federal Government had not been afraid of being too much in the right; if it had felt the courage of the grand rôle which the logic of events enabled it to play; if it had proclaimed its resolution to put an end to this scandal—the union of slavery with the republican principle; in a word,

if it had ventured to raise the war to the heroic proportions of a social crusade—then, but only then, it would have been justified in rebuking the lukewarmness of the English, and in calling them to account for their sentiments of to-day by reminding them of their sentiments of yesterday.

Let us be explicit. The Federal Government has neither taken this attitude, nor held this language, because, in fact, the principal, the real object of the Northern States appears to be the maintenance of the Union. And this explains the alacrity with which, in the North, the “democrats” have made common cause with the “republicans.”

You are aware that in America these words “democrats,” “republicans,” have not the same signification that is attached to them in Europe. The former signifies those who recognize in the Southern States the right of endeavouring to extend slavery by introducing it into the territories annexed to the United States as a body; the latter designates those by whom this right is formally repudiated. After that, it is quite evident that if the North had really drawn the sword to strike down slavery, the democrats would not have hastened with so much ardour to swell the ranks of the republicans. But this is what actually happened.

For my part, I have personally made the acquaintance of three Americans in London, all three very advanced democrats; to wit, Mr. Sanders, at that time Consul in England; Mr. Sickles, who has since furnished such tragical aliment to the curiosity of newspaper readers by killing his wife’s lover; and, lastly, Mr. Soulé who, when American Ambassador in Spain, had the famous duel you will remember, with M. de Turgot, the French Ambassador. Of these three gentlemen there is only one who has given himself up, body and soul, to the Southern men; and that is Mr. Sanders. Mr. Soulé, whom I have heard express opinions on the lawfulness of slavery which have shocked me, has half-placed himself under the banners of the Federal Government. As for Mr. Sickles, he has carried his zeal so far, if I am rightly informed, as to have raised five regiments.

I mentioned just now Mr. Sanders’ name. I remember that one day, when I was testifying my surprise to find in him a partisan of slavery, he said to me, “If you had lived in America, nothing would appear to you more simple.” “It

would seem," I replied, "to hear you speak, that all your countrymen cling to the frightful principle of slavery. Thank Heaven, however, it is nothing of the sort; and I am assured that, in the Northern States, at least, the negroes have warm protectors." "You think so, do you?" he answered, with his peculiar ironical smile. "Learn, then, that the prejudice against colour, as you call it, is nowhere, no, nowhere so profound as in the North. Learn that in the self-styled abolitionist States, the negroes are treated with such contempt, and repelled with such obstinate repugnance, that even the most abject employments do not procure them enough to live upon, and that *there* their race is beginning to disappear. *Slavery* feeds them in the South—in the North, *liberty* starves them."

I thought, and still think, that those sad words were only a calumnious exaggeration. But that the republican party itself—the party which Mr. Lincoln represents in power, and which raised him to it, is abolitionist in the proper sense of the word, is what I never heard any American of my acquaintance pretend to affirm. To draw a circle round slavery, is what the republicans desire; but that is not enough—they must march straight up to the monster and strike it to the heart.

It is to be feared, then, that in the struggle entered upon, the Federals will lose the strength which the adoption of a noble banner and a powerful war-cry would have given them.

It is of consequence to the whole earth that slavery should cease to dishonour civilization; but it is of less consequence to the whole earth whether the United States form two nations or only one.

Nay, more: how is it that the Federal Government has not understood that in thus narrowing, in thus lowering the question, it assures to its adversaries an immense advantage? As soon as the whole question is limited to ascertaining whether the Union shall, or shall not, be maintained, what weight do not the arguments of the South acquire, when they say:—

"We, the Southern States, confederated in 1778 with the Northern States, in order, sword in hand, to gain over Great Britain the triumph of this principle of eternal truth: that when a government goes against the end for which it was established, the people has the right of changing or

abolishing it. After a decisive victory, won by our common efforts, we concluded with Great Britain a treaty which recognized as free, sovereign, and independent, the States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolinas, and Georgia. In 1787, the deputies of these different free, sovereign, and independent States made with one another a compact, known by the name of the Constitution of the United States. By this compact, all the rights which were not expressly put together in common, were reserved. The fourth article of this compact states: 'Whosoever, in any one of the Confederate States, shall be subject to any sort of service or labour, shall not be allowed to seek refuge in another State, without being apprehended and given up to those to whom such service or labour is due.' Not only does the Constitution of the United States recognise slavery, but it so happens that during the last twenty years the importation of slaves has been authorised. Our rights as slave-owners, then, are clearly established by the compact which serves as a foundation to the Union. For all that, what has occurred? Why, that in the bosom of several States with which we are conditionally united, the conditions of the compact have either been violated, or are threatened with violation; that a formidable agitation is being got up, manifestly directed against the principles upon which our interests repose; that the fact of possessing slaves is denounced in them as a crime against humanity, and that, in thus exciting against us those who serve us, a conflagration is being kindled in which we and our families are in danger of being sooner or later enveloped. This being the case, we refuse any longer to submit to a compact, the advantages of which have ceased to be reciprocal, and we separate ourselves from a government which, so far as we are concerned, does not answer to the object for which it was established."

Need I observe that such is the substance of the declaration made on the 2nd of April, 1852, by South Carolina? Now, however open to refutation this reasoning may appear, it must be admitted that at least it furnishes matter for discussion, if it be for one instant allowed that the appropriation of man by man is a right, from the moment that this monstrous fact is recognized and guaranteed by a Constitution, a contract,

a compact, to which those who are subjected to it are entirely strangers.

There bursts forth the radical vice of the policy which has shrunk from assigning to the war any other object than the maintenance of the Union. This policy has substituted a question of polemics for one which, everywhere except in the Southern States, could have had only one possible solution, being one of those which are solved by the human conscience. This policy has bewildered men's sympathies, lowered the cause of the Northern States, while covering it with a veil, and provided England with the pretext of which her selfish neutrality stood in need.

I use the word "pretext," because I am compelled to acknowledge, at the command of truth, that the actual attitude of England towards the American question proves, to borrow an expression of Tocqueville, that the English possess the faculty of persuading themselves that of two causes in dispute that one is just which best serves their interests.

The annual consumption of cotton in England may be estimated at 2,400,000 bales. Of this quantity, if we take the average of the last four years, the Southern States furnish not less than 77 per cent. The number of individuals who, in this country, depend for their daily bread upon the cotton manufacturers, is reckoned at four millions, that is to say, about one-sixth of the entire population of Great Britain. These are figures which terribly help the Southern States in dispensing with the necessity of being in the right!

In fact, as long as slave labour in the South has not been directly and seriously menaced, the English have given free course to their philanthropy. We have heard them thunder against the maintenance of slavery; we have heard them unsparingly rail at the Republican institutions, of which, according to them, slavery was the cancer and the disgrace. But now that the cotton-producing countries are attacked, now that slave-labour is in danger of disappearing through a conflagration, the consequence of which opens a field for all kinds of conjectures and apprehensions, England changes her tone. She has suddenly discovered that the States of North America protect their productions by a tariff for which they are accountable to outraged civilisation. She has discovered that

the Southern States, though they also have raised the rates of their tariff since the commencement of the war, have nevertheless a decided leaning towards free-trade, and consequently deserve that the genius of liberty should watch over them.

The worship of free-trade is, doubtless, worthy of all respect, but it is chiefly so because it tends to place the necessities of life a little more within the reach of the majority—the majority that labours and suffers. What will free-trade add to the well-being of the four millions of slaves who people the Southern States? Nothing; and this ought to be thought of by these fierce enemies of slavery, who are so ready to acquiesce in its existence, provided that free-trade adds something to the well-being of the 300,000 whites scattered through South Carolina.

However, those who have lived among the planters and are acquainted with them, are perfectly aware that free-trade is what occupies their minds the least of all. It is even difficult to conceive how, in the event of a definitive separation, the Southern States could live with free-trade. To maintain themselves in the face of the North, would they not need a well-appointed Government? Would they not need a permanent army? Would they not need a treasury always in a good working condition? And whence should they derive the revenue which all that demands? Direct taxation is a thing odious to the planter, and the collection of such taxes is regarded by men who have lived in those countries as well-nigh impossible. It would be necessary, then, according to all appearance, to have recourse to customs-duties, as a means of assisting the treasury.

Another consequence of the separation would be the forced extension which slavery would receive, as it cannot subsist except by continually enlarging its sphere. Slave labour, in fact, exhausts the soil in a given time; whence it happens that the chief market for slaves in America at the present day is Virginia. For want of means of employing them profitably, Virginia exports them. Will England, which has done so much for the abolition of slavery throughout the world, remain unconcerned about the future conquests of slavery? Let us indulge a belief that nothing of the sort

is to be feared. To entertain doubts on the subject, would be wanting in respect for her genius.

As for imagining that the Southern States have definitely resolved upon doing away with the slave trade, it is quite childish to reckon upon it. He strives to deceive himself who, having had the misfortune of tampering with a bad principle, hopes that it will not produce all its evil consequences. The subject which Mrs. Stowe's letter has led me on to take up would require long developments, but I am again held in check by my usual enemy, want of space. The spectacle, however, presented by America at this moment is one worthy to arrest our attention for some time. How cruelly do they expiate their disobedience to all laws human and divine, both those who have lived on the principle of slavery, and those who have made a compromise with it! How many evils have already issued, and how many will yet issue from that poisoned source! As if the horrors of this fratricidal war were not enough in themselves, every mail brings us the recital of some new attempt upon liberty, sacrificed, as usual, to the impulses of the present hour, which are decorated by the name of political necessities. The whites threatened with the loss of liberty for having maintained, or tolerated, the servitude of the blacks! What a lesson! Ah! sceptics may say what they please, but there is surely a Nemesis for nations as well as for individuals. Woe to those who know it not, or who forget it!

LETTER XXXI.

THE POOR MAN'S CHILD.

September 21st, 1861.

Do you remember what Don Cleophas Perez Zambullo beheld when, having delivered Asmodeus from the little glass prison in which the magician had shut him up, he was transported by the grateful "Devil-on-two-Sticks" to the summit of the loftiest monument in Madrid?

"Lucky young fellow!" I have heard readers of *Le Sage* exclaim, "Oh, that we, too, had at our service a good-natured Devil-on-two-Sticks to carry us to the top of the towers of *Notre Dame* in Paris, or on to the roof of *St. Paul's* in London! What pretty things we should see in the interior of houses suddenly opened to our view by the magical lifting up of their roofs! What an amusing hour to spend!"

For my part, I should not be far from sharing this opinion, were I not tolerably certain of having to contemplate other interior scenes than that of the superannuated coquette arranging on her toilette-table her hair and her teeth; or that of the sexagenarian lover ordering, before he laid down to rest, his *valet-de-chambre* to take out an eye and take off a leg; or that of the fashionable beauty putting away her charms in a drawer, and sighing over the cruel recollection of what happened a few days before to these same charms, in full church, and in the middle of the service, through their being badly fastened.

All that, indeed, would be delightful to behold, though melancholy enough in the main. But would the Zambullo of our days see nothing more than that? Very much do I fear that in many of those houses, both great and small, which are protected against curiosity by thick walls and roofs difficult to raise, vice would be found by the side of folly, and crimes to inspire horror by the side of eccentricities that only excite laughter.

The press, even where no magician has power to enclose it in the phial which Don Cleophas broke to let Asmodeus come

out, the press is far, indeed, from coming up to the latter. All that it is able to do is to creep, following the footsteps of the police, into certain places accidentally pointed out to suspicion, to throw open the doors and windows, to summon the public, and say, "From what is passing here, judge of what is passing in many other places, without its being known, and without any chance of its being discovered!"

No matter: these revelations, however partial and accidental, are not without their value and usefulness. They furnish to an observer the means of forming a tolerably correct idea, by the inductive process, of the society which surrounds him. They excuse the misanthrope for his tendency to believe that, after all, we do not live in the best of all possible worlds.

Pardon me this long exordium. I come now to what led to it.

On Saturday last, a traveller presented himself, with a view to hire an apartment, at a house situated in Trinity Square, Southwark. This man appeared to be about thirty years of age. His manners were such as are acquired by associating with the highest class. Beyond this, there was nothing remarkable about him except his moustaches and whiskers, which an experienced eye might have regarded with suspicion. He had scarcely installed himself when he told the landlady that he came from Brussels; that his wife had quitted that city previously; that he had not been on good terms with her for some time past, because she had allowed her mind to be poisoned by unfounded reports, but that he burned to be reconciled to her. He therefore requested the landlady to see if she could not procure him an interview with his wife, as he knew that she had alighted a few doors distant, at a house which he indicated. The landlady promised her good offices, went to the house pointed out, and ascertained the time at which the lady, who had gone out, was expected to return. At the hour named the traveller rang the door bell and was admitted; but as he was in the act of throwing into his hat his false moustaches and whiskers, an inspector of police, who had been sent for in the interval, suddenly appeared and arrested him. Why? Here is the history.

The traveller in question happened to be Mr. Richard Guinness Hill, a member of one of the most ancient and

opulent families of Ireland, kinsman of a famous brewer at Dublin, and husband of the grand-daughter of Sir Francis Burdett.

In the early part of 1859 he left Dublin with his wife; Mrs. Hill, who was then in the family-way, having expressed a wish to be confined in London. They had reached Rugby when the lady was warned by her sufferings of the impossibility of prosecuting the journey. She was conveyed to a small tavern about a mile from the station, and was there brought to bed. As for the husband, without losing a moment, he hastens to the official appointed to keep the register of births at Rugby, and has his son registered—under a false name. That is not all. A week after the birth of the child, he succeeds in persuading the mother to put it out to nurse, and with that object proceeds to London. Passing on a rainy day through Windmill Street, Haymarket, he observes a beggar woman holding a child in her arms, while another stood by her side in the kennel. He approaches her furtively, slips a shilling into her hand, passes and repasses, and finally beckons her into the most obscure part of the street. When there, he said, "Will you take charge of a child? It will not be necessary for you to treat him as if he really belonged to you, and you can dispose of him by putting him into a work-house, or into an asylum." The poor creature asked for time to consult a female friend, promising to be at the same place on the morrow evening. Both parties were faithful to the rendezvous; and this time the old woman received the offer of £16 if she would consent to take the child. The offer was accepted. A fresh appointment was made for the following Friday, and they separated.

These facts constitute the first act of the drama, such at least as they are gathered from the subsequent testimony of the beggar woman, corroborated by strong circumstantial evidence. The husband, however, writes to his wife that all is well; that he has made arrangements with which she will be satisfied; and that she has only to send the child to him in London by a train which he specifies. The infant was only ten days old. It was wrapped in a shawl, confided to a little girl of fourteen, and despatched without delay to the father, who was at the station, waiting for it, and

who, in the presence of the girl, as she states, gave it over to two women, both of whom were drunk.

What had the beggar woman to gain by the transaction ? We have seen—£16. And the other contracting party ? The expectation, as it appears, of an annual income of £14,000, in the event of his wife dying without issue.

Observe how it sometimes happens that the two extremities of society touch each other. In the vices of the highest class the misery of the lowest class is a ready accomplice. For want of better, crime is there to suppress the interval ! On the occasion under notice, the beggar woman felt herself so justified in treating with the rich man on a footing of equality, that she imperiously exacted and obtained the gift of the shawl in which the babe had been wrapped. And yet the mother, who from associations attached great value to this shawl, had particularly directed that it should be brought back to her. But there are vices, with the wages of which it is not easy to bargain. The lady's shawl was therefore abandoned to the beggar woman—a circumstance destined at a later period to throw light upon the whole of this mystery.

Richard Guinness Hill, having returned to his wife with Catherine Parsons, the little girl who had had charge of the infant, the latter did not conceal from the mother that it had been left in very bad hands ; but Mr. Hill affirmed the contrary, and there was nothing more to be said.

A month, two months, six months, a year, two years, two years and a half, went by. What had become of the child ? To this question, which Mrs. Hill did not fail, as may be supposed, to address to her husband, the latter could only return evasive answers. At first it was, that the child was quite well, and there was nothing to be anxious about—then, he was dead—then, the certificate of his death being demanded, it was said that he had been sent off to Australia. The mother had conceived strange misgivings, and, to be candid, one might be surprised at less ! A violent quarrel ensued between husband and wife, followed by a complete rupture.

Shortly afterwards Mrs. Hill applied to a solicitor, who, in his turn, had recourse to the police. Active inquiries were set on foot. Handbills, posted up in all the impure quarters of London, promised a reward of £20 to whosoever should

furnish a clue. Twenty pounds sterling in the eyes of the haggard dwellers in Saint Giles's are as the mines of Golconda. It was not long before the desired information was obtained.

In London, that city gorged with wealth, and where palaces filled to the full with treasures extend over a space of several leagues, there are frightful dens,—dens without a name, inhabited by cadaverous souls in hideous bodies,—dens, the like of which do not exist on any point of the globe. Here, that I may not be accused of exaggeration, I will quote the words of the writer of a narrative that has gone the round of the English press:—"Mr. Brett, the police agent entrusted with the investigation, after having visited all the holes and corners of St. Giles's, arrived at a dirty little alley named Lincoln's Court, Drury Lane. There he discovered the abode of the woman Andrews,—the name of the beggar woman. It was a small room situated on the second storey. In one corner was lying a man at the point of death, almost entirely naked. Women, literally covered with rags, were sitting crouched upon the floor. The appearance of the place was frightful, and it exhaled a stench impossible to endure. One of the inhabitants of this horrible cavern was the heir to £14,000 per annum. He had a rag round his body, and was eaten up with vermin. His naked feet were covered with sores; and his head and body bore the unequivocal marks of desertion and ill-usage. From basement to roof the house appeared occupied by prostitutes and beggars. It was with money in the hand, and by this means alone, that the police agent succeeded in carrying off the child through the ragged mob that obstructed every outlet!"

If this description be exact, I offer my sincere compliments to civilisation!

The very clear, precise, and perfectly consistent declarations of the woman Andrews; the discovery of the shawl, which she had pledged, and which was now taken out of pawn; that of a box in which had been packed the babe's linen when it was sent up to London: all concurred in establishing its identity. The child was thereupon restored to its mother, and a warrant was issued for the apprehension of the father.

The latter was at that time in Brussels, seeking to be reconciled to his wife, who was there likewise. To draw him out

of a country where his liberty ran no risk, the police employed a stratagem, the success of which speedily proved its efficacy. It was arranged that Mrs. Hill should come to London, in the belief that her husband would follow her. It is exactly what he did do, hoping, however, to escape arrest by the aid of a disguise. I have told you the rest.

You will, no doubt, have remarked some singularly obscure points in this narrative. How explain, for instance, that a woman of high rank, a woman of wealth, could consent to send her child out to nurse, instead of engaging a nurse to come to her, if she wanted one? And how explain that for two long, two mortal years, a mother could endure that any one should keep her in suspense about the fate of a being that ought to hold the first place in the anxieties of her heart? There are evidently behind the details delivered to the public other details which are not yet known, but which the trial, perhaps, will reveal.

In the detailed report, which has served as a starting-point for all the commentaries, while furnishing a topic for general conversation, I observe the following passage: "It is very satisfactory to learn that the heir to a fortune represented by an annual income of £14,000, will resume in society the place that belongs to him."

God forbid that I should say anything against that! But, must I confess it? I could wish that in England the solicitude awakened by the rich man's child was extended also to that of the poor man. Unhappily, the tendencies, the prejudices, the usages of this country, do not on this head escape giving rise to criticism.

No later than yesterday, in an article signed "Publicola,"—a pseudonym that conceals the name of a Unitarian minister well known in the annals of the press and of the parliament,—I read a very bitter and very eloquent denunciation of the little respect that is felt here for the rights of the child in an age that concerns itself so much with the rights of man and the rights of woman. Foremost among these rights of the child, "Publicola" rightly places education, and starting from that point, he asks if it is equitable that society should treat as citizens wholly responsible for their acts, miserable little creatures which that same society allows to wallow in black

ignorance, without their even being able to acquire the slightest notion of their duties. The lawyers go about repeating with much emphasis, “*Dè minimis non curat lex.*” Is that true? Good heavens, no! It is just the reverse that is true. As a proof of this, “*Publicola*” cites, among other quite recent instances, that of a little girl, nine years of age, condemned to pay a comparatively heavy fine, or, in default of payment, to remain three weeks in Hertford gaol, for having pilfered some barley, valued at one penny; that of a little boy, imprisoned for seven days for not having paid eight shillings and sixpence, after having committed the crime from which Eve was unable to restrain herself, and not having resisted the temptation of gathering a few apples which a roadside tree seemed to offer him; and lastly, that of a poor woman condemned to a week of hard labour because, being forced to travel on foot from London to Rochester, dragging after her her little boy, scarce six years old and half starved, she had pulled up for him, by the edge of the road, four turnips partly eaten by the worms.

* Doubtless, in all these cases the law of *meum* and *tuum* had been violated, and our Unitarian Minister does not pretend to find fault with their seeing to its being strictly observed. But what rouses his indignation is, that the punishment should be so disproportioned to the offence; and that when the question at issue is the trial of the poor man’s child, no one should take into account any of the extenuating circumstances presented by the want of all education, the total ignorance of things, the degradation of want, and the temptations of hunger.

About a week ago, I was crossing Kensington Gardens. Suddenly I heard piercing cries. I ran towards the spot whence they proceeded, and beheld one of the keepers, armed with a heavy cane, repeatedly striking a little boy covercd with rags. The poor wretch’s crime was that of having ventured in the uniform of extreme penury into such a beautiful garden! I did not stop to ask that, but did what every one else would have done in my place, I rescued the victim from his tormentor. The keeper’s rage was such, that he was about to turn upon me, when I said to him, “Are there no laws in England for the protection of animals?” This question, the bitterness of which he understood, and which he did not expect, stopped him short.

These laws do exist, in fact. Legislation here has extended to monkeys the advantages of its solicitude, and the police take care to ensure respect to the rights of dogs. A few years ago some very serious Members of Parliament drew up a Bill of pains and penalties against whosoever should harness ducks to a boat, or overload a vehicle, or crowd together in a basket, so as to justify their protests, individuals of the feathered tribe. In the very last session did not Lord Raynham make a proposition—I am not jesting!—which, at least by implication, would have secured impunity for bugs and fleas? I myself have seen a foreigner in London on the point of being torn in pieces by the passers-by for having set a Newfoundland dog on to a cat.

The English are essentially humane, even very charitable, as, indeed, is proved both by their numerous benevolent institutions and by the alacrity with which they respond to every appeal made by a magistrate to public compassion. Whence comes, then, the severity which is here too frequently displayed towards the pauper child? It comes from this, that neither the humanity, nor the charity, of the English prevents them from being hostile to poverty. If it be true that the language of a people is in many respects the mirror of its ideas, we need only look to the singular application which they have given to the words "respectable" and "respectability." In like manner as they honour riches, taken by themselves and without reference to their various sources, do they condemn poverty simply because it is poverty and without reference to what engendered it, or to what, in its turn, it is apt to engender. It would seem, in their eyes, to be marked with the seal of reprobation.

Nor do they confine themselves to condemning it in the adult, as the supposed result of laziness and misconduct. Now, what does the poverty of a child prove, except that it does not rest with himself to be born rich? "It is very satisfactory to learn that the heir of £14,000 per annum will resume in society the place which belongs to him." Why not have said: "It is very satisfactory to learn that a child has been restored to his mother?"

LETTER XXXII.

ENGLISH PREACHERS.

October 2nd, 1861.

It happened one day that a certain Bishop having taken it into his head to preach, the whole congregation fell asleep. That is not quite correct; at the other end of the church, standing up and leaning against a pillar, a worthy old man was doing his best to listen. The Bishop in question, observing the effect of his discourse, was seized with a violent fit of anger, and, stretching his arm towards the poor wretch, who alone of the congregation had his eyes open, he exclaimed: "What! there is only this idiot who listens to me!" The man, who was not such a fool as he looked, replied: "Faith, my lord! if I were not an idiot, I should be asleep like the others!"

Must it be said? Since I have been in England I have heard very few preachers to whom such an adventure might not happen. England is, above all others, the country of soporific sermons; and in this matter she is so keenly sensible of her misfortune, that she has welcomed with transports of gratitude and enthusiasm the news that the Bishop of Rochester had at last resorted to an heroical remedy against the evil.

This Bishop of Rochester is a rather singular man. He has great pretensions to originality. He is very fond of meddling with what concerns him, and also with what does not concern him. He is partial to the exercise of authority. He is what we should call in French "un pieux faiseur d'embarras." In short, he is known in his diocese by the name of the "Circular Bishop." Those members of his clergy who are seduced by vain adornments still recall to mind, with a holy shudder, the Bishop of Rochester's denunciations against bearded priests. But there is nothing like striking incessantly, right or wrong, to be sure of striking sometimes with justice. Bishop Wigram, then, has just resolved that for the future candidates for ordination should

only be admitted on condition of possessing a sufficient volume of voice to be able to speak without hesitation or embarrassment, and of knowing how to read,—I mean, read well.

How express the sensation produced by the announcement of this great reform? To understand that, you must have gone to church in England. Who is he—who is she—that does not go to it? To be condemned, not at long intervals, but once every week at the very least, every successive Sunday, to the torture of _____, the very idea gives one a shudder, for a church is not like any other place where you may yawn at your pleasure. And what is there more tragical than to be placed between “decorum,” that forbids you to seem bored, and a preacher who bores you! We all know that force of character is not enough in that sort of struggle in which the nerves play a decisive part.

Accordingly, the Circular of the Bishop of Rochester has been greeted by a concert of benedictions. Only a few zealous ecclesiastics declare that this so much vaunted initiative is not really one; that in all times bishops have paid attention to the vocal faculties of candidates for holy orders; that, for example, the last Bishop of London was very particular on this point, and that the Archbishop of Canterbury pushes his zeal so far as to require that candidates shall first of all preach several sermons before him, one after the other.

Heaven grant that there be no truth in these assertions, which I suspect of being dictated by the sin of envy! If all that it is possible to try has already been tried, the evil must be one without a remedy. Ah! gentlemen, for pity’s sake do not reduce us to despair.

It is lamentable to see the oral government of souls delivered over to men who are wanting in the first conditions requisite for the exercise of this sovereign power. Let us pass them in review: one is gouty, and his eloquence has twitchings from which his hearers suffer to an intolerable extent; another, afflicted with a chronic rheum, instead of fulminating the decrees of Heaven, coughs them out; a third is an old man, who once could speak, but now only whispers, and the very beadle cannot hear him; a fourth is an ardent young

man, with a flashing eye and eager physiognomy. He would be on fire if his servant-girl broke a glass, or would move the heart of the most inflexible gamekeeper if his pointer's life were in danger; but once in the pulpit he turns to ice, and it would be easier to melt the Alps with vinegar than for him to touch the feelings of his flock.

A slow pronunciation, a fashion of intoning more odiously monotonous than the Indian tom-tom; the gestures of an automaton: in a word, a sort of solid solemnity is what for the most part characterises pulpit eloquence in this country. Such a one, in whose company you dined yesterday, and who charmed you by an animated conversation, carried on without effort and sustained without affectation, would send you to sleep standing if you went to hear him preach to-day. It would really seem as if the pulpit here had the power to make of whoever enters it an orator on wires.

Whence comes that? I fancy, from several causes. First of all, there can be but little inspiration in a calling which consists in being eloquent once every week, at a point named, at a fixed hour, before an unchanging audience, and without any of the stimulants supplied by applause, by murmurs, by the presence of an opponent, by the necessity of contending, by the desire to overcome. And then, why give oneself so much trouble for an audience gained beforehand, tolerant through respect, and respectful through devotion?

Moreover, this audience is always composed in England of a large number of persons who, while desirous of not being bored, distrust whatever has a tendency to interest them or to excite their passions. In their eyes the art of eloquence is not far from being a snare set to catch their good faith.

Shall I give you an instance?

Mr. Bellew is one of the very few English preachers who possess this precious art. He knows how to give to his voice, naturally a very fine one, agreeable and varied modulations. The grace of his delivery adds to the effect of his white hair hanging in curls above a face radiant with youth. He makes use of the choicest language, strictly classical; and as for his action, he learned it, and this explains everything, in the school of the great English actor, Macready.

Well, on account of these very advantages, the Rev. Mr.

Bellew, though much admired by the female portion of his congregation, is the butt for numerous reproaches, foremost among which I have heard placed that of having too much profane talent.

To be just, then, we must admit that a devout audience in England is not easy to please, though decorum may compel it to conduct itself as if it were so. Without being accomplished orators, could not preachers at least study how to read? After all, the work of the major part is confined to reading, not what they themselves have written, but, if I am rightly informed, what has been written for them by others. This reminds me of one of the capital anecdotes in Grimm's Correspondence, one that must be well known to you.

Piron, in his old age, became somewhat of a hermit, just like the devil. In his capacity as a convert he went to pay a visit to the Archbishop of Paris, who exclaimed, on seeing him, "Ah! is that you, Monsieur Piron? Have you read my last charge?" "No, my lord; have you?" In recalling this charming sarcasm of a wit against whom Voltaire himself feared to measure himself, I do not pretend to say that the English preachers are in the habit of having their sermons composed for them; no, not exactly. But what is certain is, that on every Saturday you meet in the Library of the British Museum, all peopled with dead preachers, I know not how many living preachers. What do the latter come to do there? I ask you the question. The least they could do, then, is to learn to read, so that neither their voice nor their delivery shall spoil what they do read. The Bishop of Rochester is of this opinion, and he is quite right.

But see in what an age of industrial speculations we are living! Would you believe it, that already a reverend gentleman has made known to his brethren, by the very profane medium of public advertisements, that he prepares candidates for the Bishop of Rochester's examinations; that he gives lessons in the art of governing the organs of the voice, and that he teaches the art of composing sermons, and, what is more, of extemporising them! "It is a pity," remarked a wag, "that his prospectus does not extend to the art of shaving, since the Bishop of Rochester will not hear mention made of beard or whiskers in his diocese."

For my part, I am of opinion, since it is agreed that in the present times one may learn anything by paying for it, that preachers should apply themselves to acquiring the art of feeling deeply what they say. It is there, in fact, that the great secret lies, and they cannot pay too dear for its communication.

Some years ago, a catastrophe occurred in the vast hall of the Surrey Gardens. Several persons were severely injured, and some literally crushed to death. And why? Because ten thousand individuals, men and boys, had crowded into a building too narrow for them, though immense. Mr. Spurgeon was preaching there.

Is Mr. Spurgeon, then, a Bossuet, a Massillon, a Father Bridaine? Not at all. He is a violent and vulgar declaimer. He introduces into his manner of preaching a triviality calculated to offend every refined or naturally delicate mind; his action is common; his hyperboles are of a coarse, sometimes even cynical, familiarity; and as for his doctrine, it is of the harshest Calvinism. But what signifies all that? You feel, in listening to this man, that the demon of strong convictions possesses him. A sonorous organ is in him only the echo of a faith of brass. He has the improvisation of inspiration. There is nothing conventional either in his attitude or his language. What comes in contact with the soul of his hearers, when he addresses them, is really his own soul. I can readily imagine that it was after this style that John Knox must have spoken, whose imperious statue even now seems to rule and threaten, at Glasgow, the city of the dead.

On these conditions you may get a congregation of ten thousand men, but on these conditions only.

You are, doubtless, aware that open-air preachers abound in this country. Cross one of the Parks on a Sunday, you will be fortunate if you do not come upon a group gathered around a man, who, with bare head and a huge Bible in his hand, is in the act of vociferating. These worthy creatures are considered by many persons as the plagues of the public streets, which the English call a nuisance. But even the liberty of uttering nonsense has something good in it, and I assure you it sometimes happens to these benevolent orators to give very useful advice to the little circle that surrounds them. At all

events they appear to believe what they say, and that is something.

If the Bishop of Rochester wishes the Church to benefit by his attempts at reform, it is not enough that he should select candidates for ordination among those who possess a fine organ—he must also look for them among those who have hearts capable of emotion.

'The voice, to reach the heart, must come from the heart.'

LETTER XXXIII

THE LORD MAYOR.

October 3rd, 1861.

THE City of London is on fire! Be not alarmed—I am speaking figuratively, and I mean simply that the election of a Lord Mayor is at this moment for the liverymen down there the subject of a very animated conflict.

You are probably aware that the City of London, which now-a-days forms only a small portion of London—is divided into twenty-five sections called Wards, and that each of these Wards is placed under the jurisdiction of an Alderman. The twenty-five Aldermen form what may be called the House of Lords of the City; the two hundred and forty-six Common Councilmen, who complete the Municipal Council, corresponding after a fashion to a House of Commons.

When the time comes round for the annual election of a Lord Mayor, what happens? The liverymen, or in other words the quintessence of the Freemen of the City, or, if you prefer another variation, the aristocrats of each guild, assemble in the Common-Hall, and there elect two Aldermen, one of whom, generally the elder, is subsequently designated by the Court of Aldermen, and becomes, at a single bound, from Mr. So-and-so, the grocer of yesterday, *My LORD*.

Such is the mechanism of the affair, and this mechanism is in play at the moment of my writing.

In France we imagine that the Lord Mayor is a very mighty personage, a Jupiter Tonans of the City. It is one of

our errors, and I know only one man in England who shares it with us--and that is the Lord Mayor himself. Ask of a merchant of any eminence, or of a first-class banker, to let you make him Lord Mayor, and see what sort of reception you will get from his offended pride! They leave all that to the tribe of petty shopkeepers.

The more so, that the intellectual and social qualities required of a Lord Mayor are not of a very high order. It is not expected that his Lordship should have the understanding of a William Pitt, or the refined elegance of a Brummel, or the deportment of a George IV. He may wear his official robes, if it please him, after the manner of a beadle, and speak French like Alderman Wood, of whom it is said by the wags, that at the time of his visit to the Parisians he wrote upon his calling cards as an unexceptionable translation of the words "The late Lord Mayor," the following phrase, so alarming for those who believe in ghosts, "Feu le lord maire."

The election of a Lord Mayor usually takes place peaceably enough, but such is not the case this time. The friends of the present holder of the title, Mr. Cubitt, a very large builder, have gathered round him to secure his re-election—which is not strictly in accordance with custom—while, on their side, the friends of Sir Henry Muggeridge are furious at what they consider a wrong, an injustice, an affront, anything but what is right, seeing that their protégé should naturally be called to serve as Lord Mayor, by reason of the position of seniority which he occupies among the Aldermen. And then, as if further to envenom and complicate the quarrel, certain busy-bodies in the City have taken upon themselves to place on the list of candidates Sir Peter Laurie, who refuses, and storms, and protests against the usurpation of his name, and will not on any terms be elected Lord Mayor, and yet has some chance of the honour being thrust upon him in spite of himself!

To explain to you the exceptional importance which Mr. Cubitt's re-election possesses in Mr. Cubitt's own eyes, I must tell you that, if he triumphs, he will also gain the honour of being created a Baronet, the Prince of Wales being on the point of attaining his majority. To speak candidly, one does not see very clearly why the Lord Mayor should necessarily be judged worthy of being ennobled because the heir-presump-

tive of the Crown attains his majority, but Anglo-Saxon logic has mysteries which I do not pique myself on being able to penetrate.

As for Mr. Cubitt's friends, who, at least, will not in any case be created baronets for having elected him, whence arises their furious zeal, and how comes it that, up to this moment—for the final result will not be known before Saturday—they have seen the balance of votes incline towards them? To solve the problem, one must understand in what consist the Lord Mayor's actual functions.

The Lord Mayor, then, presides at the meetings of the Aldermen;

He is the soul of the sittings of the Common Council, and of the meetings which are held in the Common-Hall;

He sits as judge;

He is the conservator of the magnificent and polluted river which bears the name of Thames;

He is Admiral of the Port of London;

He marches at the head of the municipal militia;

He is the chief controller of the markets;

He is the chief gauger of the City, &c., &c., &c.

But are these his actual functions?

No. The Lord Mayor's function is to give immense dinners, at which people devour basins of turtle-soup, and drink, in the shape of champagne, a part of the duty levied on coal. And observe how all men are equal before his dinners. It is not because he expects to entertain the Lord Treasurer at his table to-morrow, that his lordship will offer meagre fare to-day to Smith, the hatter round the corner; no, indeed! The Lord Mayor's hospitality is bound to be as liberal towards the inhabitants of Threadneedle Street as towards those of Belgravia. His popularity depends upon the appetite of gourmands of every class, of whom he is the solemn, official, and eternal host. The character of his duties is essentially pantagruelic. The Lord Mayor was invented to realize the conception of Rabelais. His administration means indigestion.

This is so true, that at the ceremony of a coronation the Lord Mayor acts in the capacity of Chief Butler, and his salary on that occasion is a gold cup! These symbolical usages speak for themselves.

It is therefore necessary to pass by the dignity of alderman to reach that of Lord Mayor. And what is an Alderman, pray, but a descendant in a direct line of Falstaff, of that Falstaff who was "too large in the girth to run?" At least, that is the aspect under which an Alderman appears to the imagination of the people; whence the familiar phrase, "a turtle-fed alderman."

"But what," you will say, "has all that to do with the re-election of Mr. Cubitt?" Well, just this.

The partisans of the actual Lord Mayor affirm that, during his reign of one year, and to uphold the honour of the Mansion House, he has spent out of his own pocket, over and above what is allowed to his gastronomic majesty out of the City funds, the sum of nearly 5000*l.*, and they give out that, if he is re-elected, he may perhaps spend double that amount.

Now, would you like to know what is the amount of the allowance so handsomely exceeded by Mr. Cubitt? It is 6422*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.* (fractions are not overlooked in England).

Mr. Cubitt, you perceive, does things well, and the Tory party, to whom he belongs, could not have at the Mansion House a more worthy representative.

To do him justice, let us add that the very decidedly Conservative opinions of Mr. Cubitt do not prevent him from entertaining in right royal fashion, when occasion requires, the celebrities even of Liberalism; and it is not long since he offered a banquet to Mr. Cobden which would have contented Lord Derby. Excellent titles these!

It is true, on the other hand, that his opponent, Sir Henry Muggeridge, knight and flour-merchant, has in his favour that privilege of senior alderman which has been respected from time immemorial; but he has against him his name, which, in English, is open to all sorts of bad puns. The City wits declare that that is a serious objection.

So matters stand.

Pardon me for having treated the subject with such levity. But how is it possible to speak, without a smile rising to your lips, of the Corporation of London, with its old-fashioned privileges, or of the local royalty of the Lord Mayor, with his grotesque procession of officers of other times: Aldermen, Councilmen, Sheriffs, Recorder, Chamberlain, Town-Clerk, Common-Serjeant, City Marshal, Swordbearer, &c.?

It belongs to history, you will say; be it so, but to a terribly ancient history. Picture to yourself, for instance, the existence in the middle of the nineteenth century of a feudal tradition which subjects the right of gaining one's daily bread within the limits of the City to the condition of Freeman, and which, moreover, only recognises as Freemen those who are so by descent, by apprenticeship, or by special grant from the local authorities; so that, if you are not a Freeman in one of these ways, you are a stranger! How fortunate for H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, that he received, some four years ago, from the municipal munificence what is called the freedom of the City! Without that, Heaven forgive me! he could not have opened a tailor's shop the other side of Temple Bar.

Let us speak seriously. The constitution of the City of London may have been able to render, and very likely did render good services when the matter at issue was to oppose the fiscal agents of Henry VII., or to defend liberty against the courtiers of Charles I., but it is of a very long time ago that we recall the remembrance. At the present day, I am quite certain that English liberties would be feebly protected by the said Corporation against two battalions of soldiers armed with Minié rifles, even if it pressed into its service all the pikes and cross-bows contained in the Tower of London.

Nothing can be more ridiculous than an institution which remains unchangeable, while everything else changes around it.

There was a time when the City was London—but now?

The London of our days covers an area of 78,000 acres, while the City covers an area of only 723 acres.

The London of our days contains a population which is rapidly approaching the enormous number of three millions, while the City barely contains a hundred and thirty or a hundred and thirty-five thousand inhabitants.

The London of our days is composed of upwards of 310,000 houses, while the City counts less than 15,000. What does the City of London, then, represent in London?

For all that, there is nothing like the obstinacy with which the champions of a thrice crazy institution hold out against the invasions of the spirit of reform. To listen to them, to attack the Lord Mayor's jurisdiction, is to lift the hand against

the holy ark of municipal government, as if there were anything in common between municipal government and an insignificant oligarchy intrenched behind its pretensions as in an inaccessible fortress ! Inaccessible is really the word ; for in the same proportion that the Corporation of London is ready to communicate to all the world a knowledge of its immunities and privileges, is it careful to conceal from them all knowledge of the obligations which correspond to those immunities, and of the duties for the discharge of which those privileges were in the old time conferred upon it. It has its secret archives, to which the profane are denied all access. It has its mysteries more inviolable than those of the Egyptian freemasonry ; it has its *arcana imperii*. Its bearing towards the worthy public is not unlike the ways of a magpie going off to conceal in a hole known only to itself, the silver fork it has stolen. Of two hundred Charters granted at different times to the Corporation of London, there are not above twenty that have been printed ; an admirable method of eluding the control of intermeddling minds !

As the result of an investigation that was made in the latter part of 1853, I find that by the terms of an Act of Parliament voted in the reign of Charles II., the Corporation was bound to embank the Thames from the Temple to London Bridge, and to take care that neither dwelling-house nor warehouse should encroach upon the banks of the river. Whence comes it that nothing of the kind has been done ? Whence comes it that the Conservators of the Thames have allowed the construction on its north bank of what now forms Thames-street ? And what is worse is, that the conservators of the Thames are vehemently suspected of having sacrificed its conservation to the desire of drawing a good revenue from these illegal constructions.

But, it may be said, the municipal magistracy of the aldermen does not bring them any salary, and gratuitous services are not so common that we should cry out against those who present themselves with such a recommendation. The argument is a specious one.

It is true, in fact, that an alderman on duty, administering justice at Guildhall, is not paid ; neither is the Lord Mayor, as magistrate, for the cases that come before him at the Mansion-house. But what does that matter if the two tribunals of

municipal justice cost more, indirectly, to the public than the ordinary police courts? Well, it is precisely what does happen, in virtue of the principle, as true in the City as elsewhere, that a cheap bargain is always a dear one.

To fathom this subject would lead me far. Let it suffice, then, to tell you that the Corporation of London is condemned here by all men of sense. What projects of reform have there not been put forward? How often has not the *Times*, a journal of by no means revolutionary tendencies, taken it to task? But, in England, abuses possess a strength of resistance proportioned to the energetic perseverance of the English genius.

P.S. The despatch of this letter having been delayed, I have had time to be informed of the result of the contest which gave rise to it. On Saturday evening, the Lord Mayor was re-elected, having received 1623 votes against 1148 given to Sir Peter Laurie, the candidate in spite of himself. As for poor Sir Henry Muggeridge, the respect due and ordinarily paid to the system of rotation has produced him only 561 suffrages.

Mr. Cubitt, then, is victor. He will not, however, enter upon the full fruition of his glory until

“ . . . dans ce beau carrosse
Où tant d’or se relève en bosse,”

he goes, in grand carnivalesque pomp, to take before the Court of Exchequer in Westminster Hall, the solemn oath that he will keep—a good cook.

LETTER XXXIV.

WHAT THE ENGLISH THINK OF US.

October 13th, 1861.

I HAD yesterday, with Mr. M——, a man of much merit and thoroughly English, a conversation of which I must render you an account, because it may furnish matter for useful reflections in France, and because it vividly depicts the manner in which the English mind is accustomed to regard us.

"Well, my dear Sir, what do you say, as a Frenchman, of the visit of the King of Prussia to the Château de Compiègne?"

"If I must speak out, I should not be far from seeing in this step—comparing the two dates—the reply of Prussia to the haughty language which the English Government has thought proper to adopt in the Macdonald affair."

"Language which you disapprove, I suppose?"

"And how should I approve of it? I know that a lofty tone is becoming in a great people, and the *Civis Romanus sum* in the mouth of Lord Palmerston has nothing in it inapplicable to the position which England occupies in the world. But one ought to be quite sure of being in the right before taking such high ground; and when one speaks in such a style to a nation also powerful, it is only natural to expect that the pride of the latter will rise up against it."

"You strangely exaggerate the importance of this diplomatic incident."

"I think not. National susceptibilities are easily roused. Woe to him who knows it not! I am acquainted with some Prussians here. The blood rushed to their forehead in speaking of what seems to you such a trifle, and I have heard them say that it would be a long time before the impression produced in their country by this affair would be effaced. Besides, this is not the first time that England has assumed a haughty bearing towards Prussia, and I can quite understand that at Berlin they will not be sorry to prove to

you that they have only to put out their arm to find an alliance on which reliance can be placed."

"And, pray, what alliance will Prussia find that suits her better than our own? Prussia is a military nation, England a maritime one. Prussia is a nation of agriculturists, England of manufacturers. There is consequently no possible rivalry between them, whether as regards war or commerce. They are far from coming in contact, and so do not risk to see arise between them one of those quarrels which too close neighbourhood is apt to engender. Both are Protestant. Both are threatened, if France becomes too powerful. And is not an English princess the wife of the future King of Prussia, just as it is a German prince who is the husband of the present Queen of England?"

"Ah, yes! That is nearly word for word what the *Times* said a few days ago; and your conclusions—yours as well as the paper's—would be just, if what prevents two peoples from coming into collision were the same thing that leads them to a close union. But such is not the case. The non-hostility of interests removes the causes of war; but what forms genuine and durable alliances, is the reciprocity of sympathies. Neighbourhood sometimes brings on quarrels, it is true: an additional reason for two neighbouring powers being induced to seek the guarantee of tranquillity by a system combining wise forbearance and mutual respect. A community of religious beliefs has some importance, I admit; but you must allow that this consideration has lost much of its force since men have renounced the whim of cutting each other's throats for the sake of the Deity. As for the bond that may be created between peoples by such or such marriages between their sovereigns, history abundantly shows the futility of the expectations on that point, in which mankind are so apt to rock themselves? Do you think that the German origin of the royal family of England contributes much to the sympathies of the English people for Germany? Or do you think that the title of German adds much to the sympathies of the English people for the husband of Queen Victoria?"

"I admit that the English aristocracy do not like Prince Albert; but why? Because he appears to take pleasure in displaying towards them a coldness of manner and a proud exterior that naturally offend them."

“ Well, let us leave the aristocracy alone, and speak of the English people in general. Will you assert that Prince Albert is popular? And yet with what have they to reproach him? Is he not a man of distinguished intelligence? Does he not possess an erudition as varied as it is solid? Does he not join to practical knowledge a philosophical turn of mind which renders it more elevated? Is he not an enlightened patron of the arts? Are you not indebted to his initiative for many useful institutions? Is not his conduct as a husband and father of a nature to gain him the esteem of a people that places in the first rank of virtues the discharge of family duties? He is accused of seeking to influence public affairs, indirectly at least, and in the shade; but it has never been proved by any precise act that this influence is exercised in an unconstitutional or injurious manner. Is not his real crime, then, that of being a German on the highest step of the throne? Hark ye, shall I tell you my whole thought? I suspect that a certain portion of your aristocracy behold, not without a secret sentiment of displeasure, the marriage of the daughter of your Queen to a German prince, as tending to strengthen foreign influence here; and I should not be surprised if the attitude assumed by the English Government with regard to Prussia signified, on the part of your oligarchs, ‘ We respect the power of the Queen, and have no wish to hurt her domestic feelings; but it is not because her daughter has espoused the Prince Royal of Prussia that we shall abstain from speaking to Prussia as we please; for it is right that Europe should from time to time be reminded that *we* are the masters.’ ”

“ Oh! that is so like you Frenchmen, with your mania for building up theories upon hypotheses! ”

“ What, if I were to tell you that these hypotheses were suggested to me through conversations with Englishmen, and Englishmen who are well acquainted with what goes on in a certain sphere! However, do not let us dispute about that; but allow me, in my turn, to ask you what *you* think of the Compiègne interview? ”

“ Like the rest of the world, I am reduced to conjectures; but I confess that, like many others of my fellow countrymen, I augur no good from it.”

“ And why so? ”

"Because I believe the French nation to be possessed of a mania for self-aggrandisement, and because I do not believe the French Government incapable of seeking to strengthen itself by gratifying that passion. What did they tell us when the Italian war broke out? That the war was in the highest degree disinterested, and that France was the only nation in the world that drew the sword for an idea. These declarations have ended, in what? Why, in the annexation of Savoy."

"But you must know that the annexation of Savoy was the result of that impetuous movement towards unity which manifested itself in Italy, and which had not entered into the calculations of the French Government when it hurled its soldiers against Austria. As soon as a great nation—a nation of twenty-five millions of men—was endeavouring to constitute itself at the very gates of France, threatening thus to affect her preponderance on the Continent, it seemed natural that France should look to her frontiers and claim Savoy—less as a compensation than as a precaution."

"Yes; and it is precisely this mode of reasoning that alarms us English, and makes us regard with a jealous eye the possible consequences of the interview of Compiègne. Is not that movement towards unity which so forcibly declared itself in Italy, also at work in Germany? And which is the Power that is called upon to march at the head of united Germany? Prussia. There is nothing very extraordinary, then, in supposing an agreement, in virtue of which France should pledge herself to support the construction of a Prussian Germany, stipulating for herself the Rhenish Provinces, less as a compensation than as a precaution, to use your own words."

"I am glad to observe that the mania for building up theories on hypotheses is not so foreign to your habits as you would have it imagined."

"Well, there is such a striking analogy between the case supposed by myself and the case which, to the knowledge of the whole world, has been realised."

"You do not take into account that Prussia would spend her last man and her last thaler before consenting to give up one inch of her territory."

"That, indeed, is what all the journals on the other side of the Rhine vie with one another in affirming, and I take them

at their word. Nevertheless, that does not altogether remove my apprehensions. I am not quite sure that the resolution to keep the Rhenish Provinces would hold out against the magnificent perspective of Germany united under Prussia. Remember the famous Treaty of Bâle, concluded on the 5th of April, 1795. Did not Prussia, without being compelled to it by loss of battle, and with the sole view of benefiting herself at the expense of Austria, agree to 'abandon to the French the occupation of the Prussian Provinces situated on the left bank of the Rhine, until things were definitively settled at the time of the general pacification?' Nay, more—the Memoirs of the Prince of Hardenberg, the negotiator of the peace of Bâle, are positive on that point—the reason secretly given to the Committee of Public Safety by the king of Prussia for deferring to the conclusion of a general peace the cession of the left bank of the Rhine was, 'the fear that Austria, if the fortune of arms gave her the victory, might possess herself of that country as belonging to France,' which was equivalent to saying 'Let the Rhine become a French river, if it cannot remain a German one except on the condition of belonging to Austria!'"

"I do not deny all that, only I ask permission to remind you of the outrageous reproaches which the news of the Treaty of Bâle called forth throughout Germany. Frederick William was accused of having shamelessly betrayed the interests of the Germanic body, and the Agamemnon of the coalition was cursed by all the Germans for being the first to separate from the coalition after having been the first to set it in motion, and also for having sacrificed to the ambitious views of a single State the greatness of the common Fatherland."

"Pardon me! Frederick-William was not cursed by all the Germans; for the news of the Treaty of Bâle, which did, in fact, produce a violent irritation at Vienna, excited, on the contrary, transports of joy at Berlin."

"And you thence conclude that what took place then must necessarily take place to-day?"

"Not necessarily; but my conclusion is, that what took place then would not be absolutely impossible to-day, in certain given circumstances."

"But who told you that the French Government has any idea of taking possession of the Rhenish Provinces?"

"Who told me so? The turbulent spirit of your compatriots, their itching after conquests, their appetite for war, if I may use the expression, and the fact that it is the interest of the French Government to flatter the instincts on which its popularity reposes."

"England, then, has never desired anything to excess, never coveted anything, never made any conquests! Really I seem to myself to be dreaming when I hear an Englishman reproach us with having too long arms. But a truce to recriminations, the least fault of which is their uselessness. When will you ever lay aside this sad spirit of distrust, the most serious obstacle to the alliance of our two countries—an alliance so desirable for yourselves, for us, for the whole world?"

"That's very well; but how is it possible that we should not be distrustful and anxious? Do we know anything of what is being prepared, of what is being hoped for, of what is being projected, in your political laboratories? If you, on your part, wish to know our sentiments, our ideas, our projects, nothing is more easy. For that, you have all the mouth-pieces by which public opinion expresses itself among us: our parliamentary debates, our numerous meetings, our books, our pamphlets, unrepressed by any sort of control, our newspapers, free as the air. But for us, on the contrary, what means is there of feeling the pulse of public opinion in France? Shall we interrogate the discussions of the Senate? Why, the senators in France, whatever may be their individual merit, sincerity, and frankness, have, for us Englishmen, the fault of holding too directly of the ruling power, by the very mode of their nomination. Shall we question the discussions of the Legislative Body? Why, the active interference of the préfets with elections has, in our eyes, deprived the Legislative Body of much of the authority which it would otherwise possess as an organ of the different opinions. Shall we question your popular assemblies? You have nothing of the kind in France. Shall we interrogate your newspapers? The fear of "*avertissemens*" condemns them to an excess of prudence that baffles our curiosity. Behold us, then, reduced to looking suspiciously on whatever your Government thinks proper to say, to interpreting what it chooses not to express clearly, and to being alarmed at that

which it passes over in silence. If our ministers wished ever so much to take refuge in mystery, they could not do it. Publicity, which is the law of our existence, weighs upon them irresistibly, and they cannot have any State secrets ; but, frankly, is it so with your ministers ? What a misfortune it is that the French Government does not better understand how much it is itself interested in rendering discussion in France free, entirely free ! For, after all, it is of importance to it—to it also, to it especially—to read, as in an open book, in the minds of those whose destinies it directs ; and one cannot create the darkness of night around oneself without being doomed to live in it. But that is your affair ; ours is to hold ourselves well on our guard, until liberty is understood and practised in France as it is here."

My companion paused. He awaited my reply ; but I had none to give ; and took my leave, meditating on what I had just heard.

LETTER XXXV.

THE GALLows.

October 20th, 1861.

LAST Monday twelve thousand human beings were crowded together in front of Newgate gaol to see a man die.

The attraction was a criminal whom society, represented on this occasion by the public executioner, was about to strangle.

The month of October here has been superb, and Sunday night was brilliant; but had it been cold enough to split a stone, had it rained in torrents, that would in no way have prevented the mob from passing the night in the Old Bailey. In fact, the poor wretch was to be dispatched at eight o'clock on Monday morning, and every one naturally experienced a desire to be well placed for seeing him !

The thing is generally managed in the way I am going to describe.

An immense multitude, excited to an extraordinary degree, and, if I may say so, famished with curiosity, inundates, several

hours before the time of the looked-for performance, all the approaches to the spot devoted to executions. It is quite natural. There is always a crowd waiting at the door of a theatre when a good piece is announced. But how pass the time until the hangman appears, which corresponds to what is called the *lever du rideau?* Sleep? Impossible, not because it would be necessary to sleep under the canopy of the stars, but because the expectation of a great pleasure drives away sleep. Accordingly, the time is passed in drinking, singing, swearing, chaffing. It is delightful. The women are there in force, to represent the tender sex. The business of hanging having for its object to terrify criminals by example, the spectacle is especially intended for all the thieves, all the pickpockets, all the rogues in the capital. They know it, and consequently are eager to honour the place with their presence, the more so that such a vast assemblage of individuals, and the confusion that must ensue therefrom, offer to these folks in process of conversion by example, an admirable opportunity of gathering in a harvest of purses, watches, and handkerchiefs. But the moment is at hand. Silence! What sort of appearance will our man make when the rope is put round his neck? With what sort of bearing will he enter, all living, upon death? What kind of pallor is that which is given to the countenance by the idea that eternity is the gulf into which one is about to tumble? On the last occasion, the hangman missed his stroke and was obliged to pull the sufferer furiously by the legs to finish him; let us see how he will manage, this time. Thereupon appears the man who kills and the man whom he is going to kill. The one practises his calling, the other undergoes his fate. After that, boxes, gallery, and pit become empty.

If, as sometimes happens, the sufferer marches head erect, proudly, valiantly, steadily, the moral of the affair for the spectators is, that, after all, a bandit may have courage, as much so as a soldier, and that an execution is nothing but a combat of a particular species.

If, on the contrary, the condemned criminal—whom I will suppose to have perpetrated some very horrible deed, such as a murder—is dragged half dead to death; if his knees give way under him; if his haggard aspect depicts all the terror of his soul; if his dying eyes seek for pity,—the moral lesson of the punishment will have consisted, either in hardening

the heart of the spectators by training them to relish the sight of fearful torture, or in softening it, and passing on one's pity from the murdered man to his murderer; in either case a deplorable result!

However that may be, the performance terminated, the multitude flows away. The women who were present will have a subject for conversation for at least a week. As for the malefactors, to whom the lesson was more especially addressed; they return to their dens, delighted with a good day's business, reckon up their small gains, and cherish the hope that it will not be long before the thing is repeated.

I know not what is your own opinion as to capital punishment, a question that has divided, and still divides, I fear, men of good understanding. For my part—there must be some terrible vacuum in my own mind—I have never been able to comprehend how there could be two opinions on the subject, although I have read with due attention all that has been written on the question by Montaigne, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Mably, Filangière, and Beccaria.

There are people who disapprove of suicide and yet admit the punishment of death; but I have never been able to understand how man can be justified in transmitting to society a right which he does not himself possess.

There are people who believe that society would be lost without capital punishment; but I have never understood how several millions of men banded together should need to invoke against a single individual fallen into their power the right of legitimate defence.

They talk of preventing crime by the exhibition of public punishment. I have always thought the following words of Duport admirable for their profoundness:—"What is death? The condition of existence, an obligation which Nature imposes on us all at our birth. What is it they do, then, in immolating a criminal? They hasten the moment of a certain event, that is all." "Death is only a disagreeable quarter of an hour," is one of the habitual sayings of the rogues. They regard death as an additional accident belonging to their condition. They compare themselves to the tiler, the sailor, the soldier. Their minds accustom themselves to these calculations, and from that instant your capital punishments lose their effect upon their imagination. It is actual death alone

that can be repressive; as soon as the idea of it presents itself only in a remote future, it becomes enveloped in clouds, and ceases to be either a motive or an obstacle. What! you have nothing but death to offer to crime and to virtue; you show it alike to the hero and to the assassin! It is true, to the one you show it as a duty associated with immortal glory; to the other, as an ignominious punishment: but what does the criminal care about that? The infamy does not affect him. In the punishment he sees only its material effect, and to him death is only 'a disagreeable quarter of an hour.'

Nothing, I repeat, can be more striking than these remarks of Duport. A hardened criminal laughs at the opprobrium attached to punishment. He sees in it nothing more than the act of losing his life, and that he regards, like the soldier, as an accident to be more or less foreseen, or as a risk that has to be incurred. Even if we suppose certain criminals capable of feeling the shame, would not that very fact prove that they are far from being irrecoverably corrupted, and in that case what is it that society does in killing them? More implacable, more terrible than Macbeth, who killed sleep, it kills repentance!

A supreme beauty lies in these words of Montaigne, when speaking of the true manner of acting upon men through the fear that may be inspired by disgrace:—"Il faut exercer ces inhumains excesz contre l'escorce, non contre le vif" (These inhuman excesses should be directed against the epidermis, not against the quick); and he quotes the example of Artaxerxes, who, being desirous of softening the harshness of the ancient laws of Persia, ordained that the great lords who had failed in the performance of their duty, instead of being themselves flogged, should be stripped and the flogging administered to their clothing.

If it be true that capital punishment is useful as an example, what fools our fathers were to abolish the tortures which prolonged and added horror to the spectacle! Caligula said to the executioner, "Make him feel death thoroughly." Very good! That was sound logic. A salutary example cannot be rendered too impressive. The paraphernalia of terror, intended to save society from poniards, cannot be made too formidable. Carry it out, then, thoroughly, if you dare. Return to the quartering of criminals, to burning them

on a slow fire, to fastening them, alive or dead, to the tail of a wild colt! You shudder, inconsequent men? Well, there is the condemnation of your theories on capital punishment—you have not the courage to reason closely.

No, you cannot put down murder by punishing it by another murder. No, it is not by attacking life, solemnly, in the face of the sun, that society will ever teach its members respect for life. Humanity, reason, and morality apart, statistics protest against the efficacy of sanguinary processes. It has been justly remarked that the countries in which the fewest crimes against the person are committed, are precisely those in which the penalty of death does not exist. The Empress Elizabeth of Russia took an oath when she ascended the throne not to punish any criminal with death. She kept this oath, and the number of crimes diminished. Suetonius relates that Titus appointed himself Pontifex Maximus to avoid being the author or the accomplice of the death of any citizen : " Ut puras servaret manus nec auctor posthac cujusdam necis nec conscientius." Titus, it seems, had not sufficiently investigated the effects of example !

But let us return to William Cogan, the poor wretch who was executed last Monday. His history furnishes, for the solution of the problem, elements which ought not to be overlooked.

He had been accused of having cut his wife's throat. What witnesses rose up against him? The only witnesses that appeared against him were the dead body of his wife, and the frightful condition in which he himself was found, for his own throat was half cut through. What had happened? The accused, with his last breath, protested his innocence.

At the trial, moreover, it was proved that he was a mild, inoffensive man, when he was not drunk; that for many years past he had honestly earned his daily bread; that his wife was a woman of an excessively violent and vindictive character—what grounds for doubt! They were such, that shortly after Cogan's conviction, his solicitor addressed to the Home Secretary a memoir urgently demanding a commutation of the sentence. And in fact, even supposing that Cogan did kill his wife, which in the eyes of many persons was not absolutely demonstrated, everything seemed to prove that the murder was committed in consequence of a furious quarrel, at a moment

when drunkenness had deprived both husband and wife of the use of their reason. Influenced by this idea, Mr. Cockerell and Mr. Twentyman, sheriffs of London and Middlesex, proceeded to the office of the Home Secretary, in the hope that the life of the condemned man might be spared. Sir George Grey was absent. He happened to be in Scotland, so that they had no alternative but to address themselves to a subordinate functionary, who, unable to take anything upon himself, transmitted their petition to his chief by telegraph. Supposing that Sir George Grey had been in London, the arguments of the two sheriffs might perhaps have touched him. But he was enjoying his holidays, and replied that he did not feel justified in invoking the clemency of the Crown. On what may not a man's life depend !

I now enter upon the most tragical side of this question of capital punishment. Is there in all the world a judge who thinks, or dares to say, that he is infallible ? By what right, then, does a judge who is not infallible, pronounce a sentence that is irreparable ? Irreparableness of punishment is indissolubly connected with the infallibility of the judge. What ! society condemns itself to impotence in repairing an error, if it commits one ! And what an error ! You will already have named Lesurques. Let people say as much as they like about such instances being rare—who can affirm that ? Cases are quoted in which the truth has been discovered too late ; are they all known ? And, after all, what is the value of this argument ? Ten thousand innocent persons no more represent innocence than does one innocent person. A single innocent person struck down, is the violation, for ever to be regretted, of an inviolable principle. A single innocent person struck down, is the security of all shaken for a long time ; it is public morality scandalously outraged. The actual number adds little to the gravity of this misfortune, because the innocent person whom the death of an innocent man threatens is yourself, is he, is myself, is everybody. Society, then, which is not infallible, when it pronounces a sentence which is not reparable, heedlessly enters upon a path where it knows that it is impossible to retrace its steps. It exposes itself to be unjust, and to expose oneself to be unjust is already to be so.

Another aspect of the question, not less important, is this.

Cogan, as I have already stated, was mild and inoffensive when he was not drunk, but he was liable to get drunk, and in that state lost all control over his reason and acts. A man completely drunk is very little removed from a madman. In reality, he is mad for the time being. Why is there not a penal code for madness? It avails nothing to pretend that it would be dangerous to admit that a man is not as responsible for his actions when he is drunk as when he is not. The question is not whether such a thing be dangerous or otherwise, but whether it be true or false. And when mention is made of danger, I maintain that the greatest of all is to make the laws rest upon a falsehood.

That a drunken man should be treated by the penal law as if he had preserved the use of his reason, shocks the human conscience. It is supposing that the individual has acted voluntarily, when the reverse is known to be the case. But he was free not to get drunk! Possibly so. His real crime, then, is that of having become intoxicated. But this crime which, according to you, it was optional with him not to commit, you do not punish; while the crime which you punish by the most cruel, the most terrible of chastisements, is that which he committed when all was darkness in his head and in his heart.

A very painful but, as I think, a very useful book might be written on the limits of free choice, and on the influences which, in certain social positions, impede or even paralyse its exercise. A strong will is, no doubt, an admirable thing to possess, but it is one which cannot be acquired by whosoever wishes it. Montaigne, if I remember rightly, says somewhere, "I much wish I had the power to will." Many are reduced to form the same wish.

Is a man who from his cradle has never encountered but bad examples around him, who has been left to grovel in the most abject ignorance, and on whom want has breathed its most pernicious temptations, as free to keep himself from crime as one who has been sustained from his entrance upon life by pious and caressing hands, who has grown up in the midst of the spectacle of all the virtues, who has had all the sources of human intelligence placed within his reach, and has never been urged on to crime by hunger? One may well doubt it. And yet do these necessary elements of a truly

just decision enter into the calculations of justice, such as is administered by the Law Courts ? No ; and for this very simple reason, that to weigh so many opposing influences and arrive at an exact balance would be impossible. But what are we to conclude from that, except that the most imperative duty of those who represent society and wield its force, is to look well to the causes in order then to introduce the remedy, which lies less in the severity of penal laws than in the progress of public hygiene, physically and, above all, morally.

Cogan was grievously wounded when he was arrested. According to custom, great pains were taken to heal his wounds thoroughly, so that he might be perfectly alive when the moment arrived for killing him. So is it willed by the theory of capital punishment.

Neither must I forget that he leaves behind him a child ten years of age. The poor little fellow had just lost his mother when the execution took place. The knowledge of the Newgate tragedy was carefully kept from him. So he has been able at least to weep for his dead mother, without having at the same time to weep for his father hanged on the gallows.

It is an odious circumstance, that when the condemned man was led out of gaol to enter it no more, the mob gathered together to see him, and then the monster with twelve thousand heads, uttered howls of exultation. Such is the result of the instruction imparted to the people by the penalty of death !

It would be worthy of France, that generous country, where, as the first step towards the abolition of capital punishment, the principle of extenuating circumstances has been introduced, to do away with a form of chastisement which, as a means of guaranteeing human life, publicly teaches contempt for human life, gives fallible judges the right of inflicting an irreparable penalty, and of killing repentance in killing the criminal.

And this would also be worthy of England, a country in which more reliance is placed in intelligence than in force, a country in which the policeman carries, instead of a sword, a lantern.

LETTER XXXVI.

SHAKSPEARE'S GARDEN.

October 27th, 1861.

SHAKSPEARE's garden for sale ! A fortnight ago, this was the event that occupied the minds of the worshippers of genius !

There exists at Stratford-on-Avon a little old house well-known to the pilgrims of the literary world. The first room seems formerly to have been a shop, and a butcher's shop, for hooks are still seen fixed against the walls.

Was Shakspeare's father a butcher ? Problematical.

The learned antiquary who lived some eighty years after Shakspeare, says : "Mr. William Shakspeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon, in the county of Warwick. His father was a butcher, and I have it from his neighbours, that when he was quite young he exercised the calling of his father ; but when he killed a calf, it was with a grand manner, and he made a speech. There was at that time, and in the same town, another butcher's son, who was thought to yield to Mr. William Shakspeare neither in wit nor in knowledge ; but he died young." Others maintain that the father of the illustrious poet was a cloth merchant. Lastly, one of the most recent and more enthusiastic commentators of Shakspeare is quite positive that he was the son of a cultivator of the soil, of a real "landlord."

Be that as it may, and to return to the house in question, there is behind the room already alluded to, something like what is here called a back-parlour, and over it a bedroom, in which the immortal author of "Hamlet" was born on the 23rd April, 1564. When I say the 23rd April, I accept with docility the received opinion ; for the only certain date furnished by an examination of the registers of the parish of Stratford-on-Avon, is that of his baptism, which took place on the 25th April, 1564. One would like to know everything concerning such great men, absolutely everything. But we must resign ourselves. What a mysterious cloud is there around the memory of Homer ! And as for Shakspeare, even

to the orthography of his name, there is nothing that may not be made matter for controversy. Do we not, now-a-days, write "Shakspeare," and even "Shakspere," instead of "Shakespeare"?

To keep up in a proper manner the spot where this great genius first saw the light in 1564, a wealthy and generous individual bequeathed—I do not exactly remember at what date—the sum of £5000 to the Shakspearian Society, founded by the celebrated comedian Garrick. But it so happened that the heirs of the deceased disputed this, founding their claim on some technical error in the will; and the judge was obliged to give a decree in their favour, which he did not do, however, without expressing the lively regret it caused him. The fact is, that the sacred edifice is now, as it were, abandoned to itself.

A person of gentle manners and respectable appearance shows it to visitors, who have to pay sixpence for admission. Sixpence! Well, yes! and why should they pay more? Let there be room for the poor man in the humble dwelling in which was born the author of those sublime words of reproach which King Lear, compelled to wander abroad during the night in the midst of an awful thunderstorm, addresses to himself for having thought too little, when he was powerful and happy, of those whose only protection against cold and wet were rags full of holes, and whom the tempest ever surprises when there is no shelter—

" Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm!"

There was at Stratford-on-Avon another house belonging to Shakspeare, which he inhabited after retiring from the stage. Unfortunately, that one no longer exists. A clergyman into whose hands it fell, alas! unable to put up with the bore of seeing it an object of pious curiosity, had the cruelty to pull it down and build another house in its place. Luckily it was attached to a garden, which was respected; and it is this garden which a few days ago was offered for sale.

Shakspeare's garden for sale! The garden trod by Shakspeare's feet, peopled by his thoughts, still all full of his image, would have been soiled by mortar, would have disappeared beneath the bricks! The place would no longer be

distinguishable where the mind refreshed itself that created all those gentle phantoms—Imogen, Juliet, Desdemona, Ophelia! What would our colleague, M. Maurice Cristal, think of it, he who, the other day, in the columns of "Le Temps," addressed himself with so much eloquence to the stern genius of buildings, and demanded mercy for the gardens?

It was by a letter of Mr. Halliwell that the public was apprised, about a fortnight ago, of the fatal delay after which it would be too late to redeem Shakspeare's garden. It was incumbent to save the English nation from the disgrace of such a profanation! Mr. Halliwell accordingly called for fifteen subscribers, each pledging himself to give £100. The price demanded, in fact, did not exceed £1500. Thus, in this country of England overflowing with riches, if fifteen persons were found, only fifteen persons, each willing to provide the comparatively insignificant sum of £100, the garden of Shakspeare could be preserved to the nation of whom he constituted the glory! Who would not have expected to find the sum completed the very day after the appeal was made for subscribers?

And yet what happened? At the very moment the term of grace was about to expire, Mr. Gruneisen, in the name of the Society entitled "The Conservative Land Society," and Mr. E. T. Smith, the lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, in his own name, came forward to buy this holy land, with the openly avowed intention of presenting it to the town. But the bargain had been already concluded by Mr. Halliwell for the price of £1400, the subscription having produced £700, and no one doubting that the balance would be made good.

Is there nothing that strikes you in all this?

Assuredly, if there is a people in the world that reveres its great men, it is the English people. Nowhere is the memory of those who have added lustre to the country which gave them birth, more reverentially honoured or more affectionately cherished. It is not here that men would be found capable of saying, *Ce polisson de Racine*. In the same proportion that we Frenchmen take little account—and it is much to be regretted—of our warriors, poets, and men of learning, do the English exalt theirs. They have not incense enough, they have no pedestal lofty enough, for Wellington. Hardly will they consent to learn how Nelson conducted him

self at Naples. As for Shakspeare, he is in their eyes almost more than a man. Hear how they speak of him. "William Shakspeare, who hovers above all mortals, above all classes of mortals—William Shakspeare, by the side of whom, in the matter of influence exercised over the human race, the successive generations of nobles, captains, statesmen, and princes, are but dust—" This appreciation of him by Charles Knight responds to the thoughts, expresses the feelings, and epitomises the belief of every Englishman.

I was dining one day at the house of a friend whose death I have since had to deplore—the worthy and witty Douglas Jerrold—when the conversation turned upon Shakspeare. Being asked to express my opinion, I did so in terms which faithfully rendered the profound admiration with which that potent genius has always inspired me; and I added, jestingly, that my devotion for Shakspeare was all the more meritorious that there was nothing superstitious in it. "What do you mean?" exclaimed one of the guests. "Have you any reservations to make? Come, come, speak out." I began to fear that I had uttered a blasphemy, and I saw clearly that I had everybody against me. I therefore replied with humility: "All I meant to say was, that even in presence of this grand image of Shakspeare—and I know none more grand—criticism preserves its privileges." This reply was not accepted as satisfactory, and the same guest who had before so sharply apostrophised me, begged me to point out some of the passages in Shakspeare which seemed to me to call for criticism. "Well, I will take," I said, "if you will permit me—one of Shakspeare's finest pieces, perhaps the very finest, and, in that piece, the immortal soliloquy with which you are familiar—'To be, or not to be'—Hamlet asks himself why, since life is so full of woes and annoyances, we do not yield to the temptation to cast off the burden, which would be so easy; and he finds the reason in the fact that we are fearful of something after death—death,

'The undiscovered country, from whose bourne
No traveller returns.'

But Hamlet knows the contrary, for he has actually been holding converse with his father—a traveller just returned from 'the undiscovered country,' for the express purpose of

telling his son how he died, and by whose hand, and to rouse him to vengeance! Nay, more, it is precisely upon that the whole piece turns!" The gentlemen present did not fail to assure me that the contradiction was rather apparent than real; that Hamlet's father had returned from the other world, but only in his quality of a phantom, &c., &c. They acknowledged, however, that, whether real or apparent, the contradiction which I, a foreigner, had at once observed, had never struck them. So true it is that the English—I do not say all, of course—read Shakspeare as they read the Bible; that is, while deliberately allowing the spirit of criticism to fall asleep.

Is there not room, after that, to be surprised that the appeal made by Mr. Halliwell to wealthy Englishmen was not responded to with greater alacrity? What is a sum of £700, subscribed after a delay of several days, when double the amount had been declared necessary? And I must add that the promoters of the subscription had not omitted to offer, as an attraction to subscribers, the honour of seeing their names inscribed on commemorative tablets.

Again. How is it comprehensible that, instead of appealing to the gratitude of all, an appeal should have been made to the vanity of a few? What does the will of Shakspeare say? It says, as the *Daily Telegraph* very appropriately reminds its readers:

"I leave and bequeath what I possess at Stratford, where I at present reside, my barns, outhouses, orchards, gardens, &c., to my daughter Susan Hall, to enjoy during her life, and, after her death, to her eldest son, and to the heirs male of the said eldest son; and in default of issue by this son, to the younger son and his heirs; and, in their default, to the third, fourth, sixth, or seventh sons, and to their heirs; and, in their default, to my daughter Judith and her heirs; and, in their default, to the heirs of myself, the said William Shakspeare, for ever."

Now these heirs of the said William Shakspeare for ever, where are they? Strictly speaking, it is you, it is I, it is whoever reads, whoever thinks, whoever is capable of admiration, whoever is capable of emotion, or, rather, it is the whole world. But the more direct, if not the more real, heirs of Shakspeare, where are they? Ask every man who prides

himself on being an Englishman ! It was to all England, then—to England represented, not by fifteen rich nobodies, ambitious of reading their names on tablets, but by every one of her children, from the wealthiest to the poorest, that it essentially belonged to come forward on this occasion as the legitimate inheritor "of the said William Shakspeare, for ever," and prevent the alienation of his heritage. If that was not a subject for a national subscription, there never was one.

Now what is to be said on the profound indifference displayed by the English Government in this circumstance ? What ! It gave £10,000 to Lord Clarendon in order that, in the matter of lace and frippery, England might make a good figure at the king of Prussia's coronation, and it has not £1500 to give to prevent a profanation, and save the English nation from the reproach of having committed an act of national ingratitude towards such a man as Shakspeare !

" Friend, in Jesus' name, forbear
To move the dust that's lying here.
Bless'd be he who spares these stones :
Curs'd be he who moves my bones ! "

Such is the epitaph one reads in English on the tomb of the great poet in the church of Stratford-on-Avon. Would it not have been quite as sacrilegious to allow Shakspeare's dwelling to be profaned, as it would be, in the words of his epitaph, to remove his bones ?

But you perceive in this a very strange and, for that reason, a very decisive confirmation of what I said in a preceding letter—on the excess of decentralization which is the disease of England, as the contrary excess is the disease of France. On this side of the Channel, they hold to everything being done by individuals, and their system has certainly its advantages. It impresses the character with an energetic activity, it raises the level of human dignity by inspiring in each that sentiment of confidence in oneself which the English so happily call "self-reliance," it makes men where the excess of the opposite system tends to make only children. But, on the other hand, it weakens the bond of society, it accustoms the mind to live in a narrow sphere, it shuts out large horizons from the view, and as it asks for nothing but from the individual, it is frequently only selfishness that responds. Look at the charitable institutions in England. It is by individual

contributions that they are created and maintained. What is the result? That each benefactor, reserving to himself—which is natural enough—the right of recommending his own poor, admissions become a question of majority of votes, sometimes an opportunity for intrigue, and display to us the spirit of patronage where we wish to see only the spirit of charity. And so with other matters.

If the question arose in France of purchasing, in order to preserve it for the nation, the garden of a man of Shakespeare's stature, would not the nation feel profoundly humiliated at the idea of seeing itself replaced, in the accomplishment of this duty, by fifteen traders who have made money? And would not the State regard itself as the inevitable purchaser of a property of this kind?

The truth is, that we fall into one extreme, and that the English fall into the other. Is there no means of assigning to each of these systems, once for all, the part that belongs to it? Is it not possible to ascribe, as common sense points out,

What is individual to the individual?

What is communal to the commune?

What is social to society?

What is national to the nation?

LETTER XXXVII.

DEATH OF SIR JAMES GRAHAM.

October 28th, 1861.

SIR JAMES GRAHAM has just died, at the age of sixty-nine. He was endowed with a manly beauty, a persuasive eloquence, and a remarkable talent for administration; but there was something in him which was found to render these qualities almost useless. With the highest aptitude for power, Sir James Graham has never left but the faintest traces of his passage. Possessed of everything that is usually of a nature to conciliate men's minds, he never succeeded in making himself popular, or rather in not becoming unpopular.

Sir Robert Peel changed opinions more than once, but he was beloved in England, precisely because he proposed and carried through the very measures he had himself long opposed, and people were grateful to him for not obstinately holding out against all. Sir James Graham was not nearly so fortunate in his political variations, and it would be without the slightest feeling of sympathy that the English people would read on his tomb an epitaph reminding them that he was, as a statesman, what Fortune is said to be, according to Ovid and many others.

LETTER XXXVIII.

LORD NORMANBY.

November 3rd, 1861.

THERE is a man here whose name no one ever pronounces without a smile rising to his lips. This man is the most noble Constantine Phipps, Marquis of Normanby, Earl of Mulgrave, &c., &c.

I remember to have somewhere seen Lord Normanby described as the type of "mylord," not such as was personified in the last century by the Chandoses, the Montagues, the An-casters, or the Whartons, but such as it is represented in our theatres and in our romances—a great devourer of roast beef and a great consumer of grog; much desired by innkeepers, much dreaded by postillions, and always ready to cover with guineas counterfeit Raphaels and bastard Titians. There is some truth in this portrait, and it may be said that, in some respects, Lord Normanby belongs to the same variety as the late Charles Vane, Marquis of Londonderry. But the hero who is sitting to me at this moment is distinguished by qualities peculiar to himself, and which constitute him a truly unique individual.

He has notably this in particular, that he takes pleasure in being ridiculed. He not only braves it, but solicits it. *Mr. Punch* himself—the redoubtable *Mr. Punch*—feels himself disarmed in presence of the impregnable serenity of Lord

Normanby ; and never did any man take it more easily in the midst of public derision.

By what satirical decree of Fortune, then, does Lord Normanby happen to have found a place among statesmen ? He was born for the Court. He makes an excellent figure in a drawing-room. His manner is amiable. His conversation is not much worse than any one else's. He has even—though one would scarcely imagine it at first—some pretensions to literature, and in his best days it fell to his lot to write some novels, excellently adapted to form the hearts of ladies'-maids. But who can escape his destiny ? That of Lord Normanby was to be a Secretary of State, a Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, an ambassador ; in short, a sort of great man. Since then he has been in search of a *rôle*, and the one he has at last taken up is this, to rail at people in a state of revolution.

When I say to rail at, I use a very mild expression ; for in his quality of courtier, Lord Normanby does not appear to see any harm in calumniating a little here and there.

In 1857, for instance, he published a book with this title : "A Year of Revolution in Paris," a book in which his historic muse took the most unblushing liberties with truth. That he should have called the Revolution of 1848 a swindle, the members of the Provisional Government shabby rascals, and the people of Paris, as a body, *canaille*, may be taken for what it is worth. That is a mere matter of style, and it is doubtless from not having better models at hand that his lordship, having occasion to make use of invectives, has borrowed the vocabulary of his lackeys.

But why handle truth in such a cavalier fashion ? Why represent those unlucky members of the Provisional Government—so meek, in truth, that it is almost beyond belief—as individuals who met in council with pistols in their belts, and whose deliberations invariably terminated with this amiable warning, 'If you say another word, I will shoot you !' Why give as the result of the revolutionary aspirations of France the decapitated heads of *gardes mobiles*, dragoons' hands put by in store, and goblets full of poisoned wine accepted without distrust, thanks to the caressing glance and winning smile of the *vivandières* ? Why invoke, in justification of such nonsense, the authority of honourable men who could not fail to reply by a flat contradiction ? "I pro-

test against the imputation of having amused myself at Lord Normanby's expense by telling him cock-and-a-bull stories;" in those wittily polite terms M. Jules Bastide repelled the accusation of having furnished to the noble marquis certain information, the responsibility of which the latter sought to leave with him.

That is not all. This unfortunate book of Lord Normanby called forth refutations which proved that there was not a word in his lordship's work that was not an error—I speak euphuistically—and that, while living in Paris at a time when history was in the streets, he was ignorant of things which his hall-porter would have blushed not to know.

You cannot conceive with what shouts of laughter this book was received in England from the moment of its publication. Writers vied with each other in turning it into ridicule. On this point the press exhibited a rare unanimity. The author's friends were in consternation. But he? *Medea* was not more haughty:

"Contre tant d'ennemis que vous reste-t-il? Moi,
Moi, dis-je, et c'est assez."

It was thus he re-entered the lists at the beginning of 1860, firm on his legs, carrying his head high, insatiable of defeat, and boldly defying the scoffers. He had been living in Florence watching his opportunity; and Providence, who always favours those who believe in it, had excited the Italian Revolution expressly that Lord Normanby might be able to call upon it to render an account of its doings. With what an air and in what a style did he attack this thrice impious Revolution in a full House of Lords! There were men who dared to proclaim it just! There were men who dared to proclaim it national! Bah! The revolution of Italy, at Florence, had issued, armed from head to foot, from the shop of the baker Dolfi. Dolfi had taken *sbirri* into his pay; Dolfi had under his orders the praetorians of the bye-ways; Dolfi had corrupted by his largesses the people of Florence, who otherwise would have continued to adore the Grand-Duke. "And that is why your daughter is dumb." Without Dolfi, the Italians would never have discovered that they were not independent, nor would ever have aspired to

unity. It was this confounded baker who was the author of all the evil.

Thereupon a letter from Dolfi, very sensible, very earnest, very dignified, such as Lord Normanby himself might have been capable of writing had he been born a baker.

Dolfi represented to his lordship :

That he did him, a humble individual, infinitely too much honour in supposing him rich enough to act towards the people of Florence after the manner of the ancient Roman emperors;

That he had never hired a single bravo;

That his love for his country did not prevent him from honestly baking his bread;

That under the paternal government of the Grand-Duke there had been 70,000 political imprisonments, and 200,000 persons placed under the surveillance of the police;

That under this same paternal government there had been numberless domiciliary visits, besides secret proceedings against unhappy beings who had been denied the right even of engaging counsel, incessant violations of the liberty of the subject, and ten years of terror: all things for which no one could fairly render his baker's shop responsible;

That the passion of the Florentines for the unity of Italy had been sufficiently proved by the address which they had sent to the King of Sardinia, an address bearing 140,000 signatures, and by the alacrity exhibited by each individual to furnish his contingent towards the purchase of the million of muskets demanded by Garibaldi;

That the noble lord was greatly mistaken in putting threats of death into the mouth of the enemies of the Grand-Duke, seeing that those threats of death proceeded, on the contrary, from his own partizans, and had been followed by attempts to carry them into execution—as witness what took place at the time of the Ball given on the 17th January, 1860, by the municipality of Florence;

And, to conclude, that his lordship had evidently obtained what he pretended to know about foreign countries from what constitutes the froth of a nation, grooms, guides, and liars in livery.

So spake the baker Giuseppe Dolfi, and the English laughed, but certainly not at the baker.

One would have thought that after this first misadventure Lord Normanby would have kept quiet. Not so. Behold him reappear, waving in his triumphant hand a pamphlet, on the first page of which shine these words : " Defence of the Duke of Modena," &c. This time, the adversary with whom the noble marquis grapples is Mr. Gladstone, who has had the great audacity to bring to the knowledge of the public some facts to serve for the history of the Duke of Modena.

One day, a young man of Carrara, named Granaj, was convicted of murder. He was under twenty-one years of age, and the law of Modena does not permit any one of that age to be executed. What was to be done? In his paternal solicitude, the Duke issued an edict abolishing the exception. Another day, the good Duke is informed that a certain Felice Librera had come out of prison, because the term of his imprisonment had expired, and he is indignant at it. In a conflict between the people and the military at Carrara, a soldier fires without having received an order from his commanding officer: bravo, my friend, the Duke is pleased with thee—it is thus the Dukes of Modena would be served. Too much would need to be said were it necessary to say all.

But what is yet more striking than the facts cited by Mr. Gladstone, is the manner in which they are explained in the book that has appeared under the auspices of Lord Normanby; for it is only the introduction that is from his pen, —the rest, as the title itself indicates, being composed of documents and extracts :

*Au peu d'esprit quo le bon homme avait,
L'esprit d'autrui par complément servait,
Il compilait, compilait, compilait. **

It results, then, from the compilation in question, that Granaj was not put to death, the ducal edict taking effect only in future cases.

As to what concerns Felice Librera, of what do people complain? The Duke confined himself to an expression of disgust at seeing him so soon clear of the affair.

Is it not permitted to princes, then, in these times, to find fault with judges for being too mild?

As for the soldier who fired without having received any

order, the real delinquent was the officer by whom the order ought to have been given. What is clear is, that it is only dishonest persons who can question the extreme tenderness of feeling testified by the facts so maliciously brought to light by Mr. Gladstone.

But the book of Lord Normanby and his co-labourers is not merely a defence—it rises to the height of an attack. And it is here that the noble marquis is really terrible! Will you dare deny the illegality of the revolution of Italy when you learn that Farini stole the linen of the Duke of Modena, having perceived—see how cunning are the Italian revolutionists!—that this linen was marked only with an F, a circumstance admirably calculated to cover the larceny.

Verily, it would have been asking too much from Mr. Gladstone's courtesy to expect that he should take up a compilation of this character seriously. He contented himself, therefore, ~~with~~ declaring that as the very title of the work indicated that Lord Normanby was not its author, he should abstain from noticing it until its authorship was more explicitly avowed. But Lord Normanby would be in despair if he were not deemed worthy of being trounced. So he proclaimed his responsibility. As Delatouche said of a Lord Normanby of his time: he begs for ridicule as alms. Pass on, good man, they have bestowed it upon you.

Shall I confess it? However little capable of defence the Duke of Modena may be, I should feel respect for the courage which is decidedly shown in upholding him under the circumstances, if this courage took its rise in pity for misfortune. Never did the fact of holding out a helping hand to the vanquished and of protecting those who are trampled under foot by all the world, fail to touch my heart. Unhappily, that is a merit which Lord Normanby's antecedents prevent me from recognizing in him. Was not Louis Philippe, by whom his lordship had been treated with so much kindness, sufficiently prostrate when the ex-Ambassador of England at Paris cast upon him contempt and insult?

Had there even been some truth in these diatribes! But no. Allow me to quote as an example the account of Louis Philippe's flight which Lord Normanby gives in his work, "A Year of Revolution in Paris," (pp. 181, 182):—

"The king and queen arrived at Rouen, embarked on board

the river-boat, they then re-descended in it to Havre; but had to make a short step from one quay to the other to get on board the English steamer. And here it was that the king was very near betraying himself by overacting the part of an English bourgeois anxious to return home. It was evidently of the utmost importance that in a place where he was so likely to be personally known, he should keep himself quiet and endeavour to escape observation. Instead of which, I hear he was bustling about, exclaiming loudly: 'Where is Mrs. Smith? Where is my old woman? Come here, my dear.' He was, in point of fact, recognised on the quay by a fishwife, who screamed out, 'Tis the king, who is making his escape!' But it was too late to stop him."

Now mark how the passage, in which Louis Philippe's flight is so cruelly and mendaciously described, was refuted on the 20th May, 1858, in the *Athenaeum*, one of the most influential literary journals in England:

"Not one circumstance of this narrative that is not false. Louis Philippe did not embark at Rouen and did not descend the Seine. He embarked in a ferry-boat at Harfleur, with an Englishman who passed for his nephew. The king and queen disembarked at Havre, where they separated, and proceeded by different routes to the English steamer, the king with General Dumas, and the queen leaning on the arm of the English consul. Louis Philippe did not see the queen again until they were out at sea and out of danger. So much for the vulgar story of 'Where is my old woman?' But what follows is more serious. A detailed report of the facts was immediately addressed by the English consul to Lord Normanby, at Paris, and to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs at London. Lord Palmerston submitted this report to the Queen of England, who commanded that it should be printed and deposited at the Foreign Affairs office, in the collection of historic papers. A copy of the printed and deposited report was dispatched, the second communication of the same circumstances, to Lord Normanby. Now, how is it possible that, having before him an authentic document, the accuracy of which it was so easy for him to verify, point by point, Lord Normanby can have thought it wise and honest to publish a version of this tragical event so completely

different from the true· version?" (*Athenæum*, 20th May, 1858).*

You see, the officious and well nigh official defender of the Duke of Modena has not always been so tender as he is to-day towards fallen greatness. There was a time when he blackened with the same ink the faces of the republicans and that of a king who had been his host. In the matter of slander, he did not regard himself as obliged to tell the truth about either nations or kings. At present, as it appears, he has lost his high impartiality—he now only calumniates nations.

LETTER XXXIX.

THE NINTH OF NOVEMBER IN THE CITY.

November 10th, 1861.

THE Ninth of November, that is something like a date! Ask every daughter of Eve who has been, is, or will be Lady Mayoress.

On the Ninth of November, London awakens in the expectation of a great day.

On the Ninth of November, omnibuses and cabs are eagerly put in requisition in the suburbs by worthy fathers of families and their excited wives, accompanied by their numerous offspring.

On the Ninth of November, none can contain themselves for joy throughout the region traversed by the sound of the bells of Bow Church, that is to say, in the quarter of cockneys, a race of beings very superior to that of the 'badauds' of Paris.

On the Ninth of November, at an early hour of the morning, the approaches to the Mansion House are crowded with policemen in active motion, with lackeys carrying at their button-holes bouquets of flowers larger in circumfer-

* I have not the *Athenæum* of the 20th of May near at hand. Therefore it may be that in this, as in other passages quoted from the English, the copy sometimes slightly differs from the original, so far as mere expressions are concerned, on account of the retranslation.

ence even than their own calves, and with vergers proud of their gay cloaks.

On the Ninth of November, the Company of Fishmongers and that of Spectacle-makers, to name only two, display their glorious banners.

On the Ninth of November, knights of the Middle Ages, clad in heavy armour, and with squires in their train, as is befitting, assemble at an early hour in a small street near Guildhall, and, while smoking their pipes, await the arrival of their chargers. According to the wags, as soon as the trumpet sounds, these weighty warriors have to be hoisted into the air by means of cranes, and are thus dropped into their saddles ; but I can hardly believe it, never having read in history that the gallant Chandos and other "preux chevaliers" had to undergo this mechanical process.

The Ninth of November is the day of glory, the day of days for the high dignitaries of the City, to wit : the Recorder, that great administrator of criminal justice in the East of London ; the Remembrancer, charged, as his name indicates, with the duty of remembering, and who passes his life in forgetting why he tied a knot in his handkerchief ; the City Marshal, who has the honour of figuring in the van of the Lord Mayor's procession, and of displaying the legitimate pride of the general of an army ; the Mace-bearer, respected and respectable depositary of the golden mace formerly given to the City of London by Charles I. ; lastly, the Sword-bearer, Mr. Sword-bearer, who carries the sword with the magnificent scabbard that was presented to the Corporation by Queen Elizabeth. Why does he carry that sword ? Indeed, he cannot tell you, the worthy good man ; and of this you may be quite certain, that, very different from the French grenadier, who, when struck with the flat of a sabre, exclaimed : "The only part of a sabre I like is the edge," Mr. Sword-bearer would be entitled to say, "Of my sword I never knew any part but the scabbard."

But it is for the Lord Mayor especially that the Ninth of November is a date without a parallel. If the 29th of September is the epoch at which, every year, in the City of London, the grocer at the corner or the fishmonger opposite wakes up a lord, the Ninth of November is the far more heroic epoch at which this sovereign of a London that is not

London, this king of Little Britain, majestically proceeds to Westminster to take before the Barons of the Exchequer the customary oaths, or, in other words, to be sworn in ; and that—mark it well—in a coach drawn by six horses, through streets flooded with people, and to the sound of trumpets, fifes, and drums.

I have too great respect for the authorities, whether municipal or other, to venture to liken the Lord Mayor's procession to our old procession of the "Boeuf gras ;" but that there is a family likeness between these two august solemnities, is what truth compels us to own. Only things are better done, if I mistake not, on this side of the Channel. Good heavens, what a procession ! And what a crowd to see it pass ! With what picturesquo good taste is the present married to the past at this festival, over which so evidently hovers the genius that in France presides over the destinies of the Cirque Olympique ! I like to see in the uniforms of the Volunteers and of the Life Guards, as compared with the military attire of the Middle Ages, the proof that the traditions of war are transmitted with the sole modifications necessitated by the progress of the times. I like to perceive the link that unites the manner of killing in former times with that practised in our own. And, apart from the interest attached to this lesson in history, it does not displease me to admire a helmet of antique shape on the head of the cabman who drove me the day before yesterday to the theatre, and whom I easily recognise in spite of the heroic airs he strives to assume.

Yes, it is very fine, all that ! And to think that every year the people of London are fortunate enough to enjoy this spectacle ! Some days ago a report spread abroad of some project or other for suppressing the Lord Mayor's Day. Heaven be praised ! the event has done more than disprove these sinister rumours, and never has the Lord Mayor's Show been more splendid.

The reason they give in the City for this increase of magnificence is, that the mayor elected, or, to speak more correctly, re-elected, is named Cubitt. Now, observe, *cubit* in English signifies *coudée*, whence it clearly results that by his election the City of London has become greater by a cubit. That you will be able duly to appreciate the point of such a joke, is more than I can affirm ; at any rate, here is a wine which

tastes of the soil, and I ought to add, that the City has in all times cultivated with success mythology, allegory, and playing upon words.

In 1415, for instance, at the time of the welcome offered by the citizens of London to Henry V., on his returning, alas! victorious from the ensanguined plain of Agincourt, it so happened that the Lord Mayor was named Wells (a name signifying *puits, fontaine*), and, moreover, that he belonged to the Grocers' Company. What did these do? They set up in Cheapside three *fountains*, which supplied all comers with wine in abundance, through the gracious medium of three young damsels, personifying Mercy, Grace, and Pity. Nor was this all; for care was taken to surround the three fountains with trees loaded with oranges, lemons, almonds, dates, &c.—a delicate allusion to the occupation of the said John Wells. So much for allegory and playing upon words; now for mythology. In 1629 the ironmongers gave a representation of Vulcan's forge. The blacksmith of Lemnos was seen at work in the midst of his swarthy assistants, all in their shirt sleeves, and with leather aprons. The fire blazed up in the forge, the lightnings flashed, the thunder growled, and over and anon were heard sounds of an infernal music in praise of iron, the anvil, and the hammer.

But to return to yesterday's festival: nothing could have been more splendid, after a fashion of course.

It was quite half-past twelve before the procession set out.

In this place, a characteristic trait. Previous to departure, the Lord Mayor, in accordance with ancient usage, proceeded to Guildhall to receive the congratulations of the different members of the Corporation. Scarcely were the customary civilities exchanged, when his lordship discovered that there was nothing more urgent to be done than to inspect the arrangements made for the banquet which invariably crowns the splendours and rejoicings of the 9th of November.

A glance at the tables speedily convinced the worthy magistrate, as well as the dignitaries in his suite—chamberlain, recorder, remembrancer, town clerk, and the rest—that everything was for the best in the best of possible worlds. But while awaiting the gastronomic pleasures of the evening, and in order to put themselves in a condition to endure the torments of expectation, the high functionaries in question re-

paired in haste to the committee room, to say a word to the fortifying broths and spiced wines demanded by the gravity of the circumstances. Having supplied themselves with ballast, they took their places in the procession, and the display commenced.

In ancient times, and down to 1711, the Lord Mayor, on these occasions, performed the journey on horseback. That was well enough in the era of barbarism; but the Lord Mayors of the present day have much sounder ideas of comfort. That is why they allow themselves to be gently drawn along in a coach, which, parenthetically be it said, is one of the principal objects in the pageant of which I am about to speak.

This coach, of a venerable age, for it was built in 1757, is the most hideous machine that can possibly be imagined, though it is only fair to confess that no expense has been spared in gilding it, that it was purchased for £1065 3s., and that its annual keeping-up does not cost less than £100. Important considerations these, I trust, in its favour. However that may be, it is in it that his lordship seats himself on the day of the Show, accompanied by his chaplain, his mace-bearer, and our friend Mr. Sword-bearer, for whom I have always had a weakness because of his placid air.

Another sign of the degeneracy of manners is, that in the time of Anne Boleyn, for instance, the task of thrusting aside the mob along the passage of the procession was confided to savages all covered with hair, without counting a girdle of green leaves. These savages were armed with clubs, and were assisted, in their task of maintaining public order, by men whose faces were concealed by a frightful mask, and who cleared the way by the help of crackers. Those who were entrusted with the duty of protecting the march of the procession thus contributed to adorn it; but now-a-days, instead of savages all covered with hair, we have only police constables. It is a great loss.

I should also like to have seen the two giants of Guildhall (Gog and Magog) pass yesterday—the two giants that made such a fine figure in the procession of 1837. They were, it is said, admirably constructed figures, put in motion by persons placed inside of them, and, being fifteen feet in height, were able to look in at the window and see what was doing in the

rooms on the first floor. What are the Corporation of London thinking of that they have nothing of the kind to offer us in this age of mechanical perfection ?

But a truce to melancholy remarks—a truce to superfluous regrets—and let us learn to moderate our desires. After all, the procession of yesterday had its charms. The innumerable spectators of every age, of both sexes, and of equivocal condition, which it had attracted, greeted his municipal majesty with a storm of hurrahs, hisses, hoots, and groans, which left, under the head of noise, little to be desired. And the eyes were not less agreeably flattered than the ears, thanks to a sudden inspiration on the part of a portion of the mob—I mean that wan, ragged, fearsome mob, the like of which London is the only city in the world capable of containing. The inspiration consisted in not suffering any heads to remain covered. So, hats flew about in all directions. This merry conceit is the peculiarity by which the procession of the 9th November, 1861, will be distinguished from those which have preceded it, in the annals of the City.

In the evening, there was—need I make the remark?—an enormous banquet at Guildhall. As I was not there, I cannot give you the bill of fare very precisely; but I am assured that it surpassed in sumptuousness all that has ever been seen, eaten, or drunk, up to the present moment. That is saying no little. Judge: the bill of fare comprised 250 tureens of turtle soup, each containing five pints; 60 roast pullets, 60 pairs of fowls, 53 hams, 80 pheasants, 80 roast turkeys, 6 leverets, 40 brace of partridges, &c., &c. And what a dessert! Of the wine consumed on these grand occasions there is no necessity for speaking. Who can know? Toasts, of course, were in abundance. How sit down to table in England without drinking to the health of somebody, or to the glory of something? Among the guests were the Duke of Cambridge, Lord Palmerston, the Duke of Somerset, Lord Stanley of Alderly, the Danish Ambassador, the Ambassadors of America, Prussia, and Sweden. It follows, therefore, that there were political toasts. In that by which the Duke of Cambridge replied to the toast proposed by the Lord Mayor to “Our national defenders,” I remark the following passage:—“On entering this hall I read, at the other end of it, an inscription which exactly expresses what the people of

England desires—"Defence, not defiance." On his part, Lord Palmerston, in alluding to the emblems of peace that decorated the hall, did not fail to say: "On entering this building we saw armed men standing under the gateway—volunteers, yes, volunteers, who are the emblem of the resolution of this country to bar the passage to whoever shall seek, by soiling it with a rude and unholy foot, to disturb the peace and tranquillity that reign in it." These words were loudly applauded. A word to the wise. The Ambassador of France, however, was not there, a circumstance that did not pass unnoticed.

This is nearly all that appears to me of yesterday's solemnity as worthy of record. If I have adopted a tone of levity, it is because, in my opinion, men of sense should treat only serious matters in a serious manner. I am certainly no more opposed than my neighbours to national festivals and popular rejoicings,—far from it! I even believe that they are a powerful means of public instruction; and had they no other advantage than to cause the poor to forget for an instant the heavy burden of every day, that alone would be their justification. But what I cannot approve of, are pageants without any moral meaning, which, leaving the heart cold, and saying nothing to the mind, feed the eyes of the spectators with coarse and grotesque spectacles.

If, by the Lord Mayor's Show, it is meant to celebrate the principle of election, the principle of free choice of the City magistrates by the citizens of the City, why render the celebration ridiculous, instead of rendering it imposing and touching? To what exact idea, to what elevated sentiment, do those parodied warriors respond, or their noisy display of burlesque luxury, or this monster banquet of rich people in a city in which the famished swarm? These are not festivals worthy of a nation out of its minority, such as is the English nation. It is not for liberty to imitate despotism in the adoption of the means which it employs to amuse the imbecility of nations in their infancy.

LETTER XL.

SAXON GOOD SENSE.

November 17th, 1861.

It is a long time ago since Ganilh, in his "History of the Public Revenue," remarked (t. i. p. 419):

"In the actual state of civilization, and in the commercial system in which we live, all public power should be limited, and an absolute power cannot subsist."

These words contain a prophecy, the fulfilment of which Europe is beginning to witness!

Need I tell you that M. Fould's memoir, and the Imperial letter which followed upon it, have produced a profound sensation in England? But merely to understand the extent of the effect produced is of secondary importance; the essential point is to seize its character, to thoroughly comprehend its bearing. And it is upon this I wish to explain myself freely. I pity him who, in the lines I am about to trace, can see any other motive than that of the public good. Living in a foreign land, where I observe with a growing emotion all that is of a nature to affect the interests of my country, I obey, in communicating to you my impressions, an impulse which, I feel, places me far above the narrow calculations and vulgar prejudices of party spirit.

The more I study the spectacle which I have before my eyes, the more firmly do I become convinced that the judgments of England on the movements of France ought to be carefully weighed. What is passing with respect to us in the souls and minds of the English, is a thing that we cannot too earnestly exert ourselves to appreciate correctly. It may happen that the book contains pages painful to read—but what is to be done? Must we leave France, from fear of afflicting or even of offending her, in ignorance of what it concerns her in the highest degree to know? An arrant coward is he, who would place the desire of pleasing her before the duty of serving her!

"A sailor related to me," writes Benjamin Constant, "that he was once on board a vessel with a passenger who had frequently made the same voyage. This passenger pointed out to the captain a rock hidden beneath the waves, but the captain would not listen to him. On his insisting upon it, the captain had him thrown into the sea. This energetic measure put an end to all remonstrances, and nothing could be more touching than the unanimity that reigned on board, until, suddenly, the vessel touched the reef, and was wrecked." (Benjamin Constant, *Mélanges*, p. 438). They had drowned the giver of the warning, but the reef remained.

Thank Heaven, we have not reached that point; and the proof that givers of advice are not thrown into the sea for having pointed out a shoal is, that M. Fould is still Minister of Finance. Let not those, then, hesitate to follow his example who have useful truths to tell.

You will perhaps imagine that what has struck the English in M. Fould's Memoir is, what it suddenly brings to light. Well, no. However startling may be the avowal of a deficiency of a milliard, this figure has created no astonishment, or rather it has caused surprise to many, but in the opposite sense to what you probably suppose. The situation was believed to be worse, so much has the veil spread over public life in France engendered strange suspicions, dark suppositions, and sinister conjectures! A press reduced to stammering, a mock publicity, public opinion exiled or dead, the nation without any guarantee against the ruler, the ruler without any guarantee against himself, one sole will deciding everything, irresponsibly and in the dark, under such colours has the English press, from the *Times* down to *Punch*, never ceased to represent France, and under such colours has France hitherto appeared to the English; whence they have concluded:

"That there must be much to conceal in regions that seemed to dread the light of day;

"That the temptation to spend money without reckoning it up, must be irresistible where it is not checked by any sort of control;

"That in what concerned the financial prosperity of France, there was no authority in the official affirmations, from the time it became dangerous to contradict them;

" That the total of our budgets must be a bottomless abyss, since it was not permitted to public discussion to fathom them ;

" That, consequently, the enormity of our expenses, instead of attesting the strength of our resources, indicated the extent of our perils ;

" And finally, that we were engaged in building a palace of marble and gold to lodge a skeleton therein."

It is hardly necessary for me to observe how much this view of the case is exaggerated. Unfortunately, that is not the point. The opinion of England with respect to the affairs of France, is it, or is it not, in accordance with what I have just stated ? That is the question to be decided ; and on that head, I fearlessly appeal to any one who, living on this side of the Channel, has been in a position day by day to examine public feeling.

Is it not, I ask, a great evil that, rightly or wrongly, France should be judged in this manner by a nation whose destiny is so closely bound up with ours, whose alliance is so desirable for us, and whose influence on the world's progress is so considerable ? And this evil, whence comes it ? It comes from the shadow into which the absence of a genuine constitutional system banishes public life in France. In the eyes of a foreigner our situation is obscure, and therefore he sees phantoms in it. Phantoms are children of the night. Do you desire that they should vanish ? If the dawn has not yet broken, at least light the torches.

I repeat, the statement in the *Moniteur* of the deficit which M. Fould has denounced with so clear a voice has made very little impression on well-informed persons here. But what has been remarked upon, and with good reason, is the character of the imperial declaration. To yield to the clamours of an insurgent multitude, may seem a weakness when it is not a stoical homage rendered to right ; but to understand what there is excessive in the power with which one is invested, and to offer the public sacrifice of it to a submissive people, in the midst of an universal silence, is an act of intelligence and prudence of no common order, and which deserves to be praised by those in whom praise is not servility. The salaried and official courtiers of the empire very likely do not reason in this manner, and I would wager that at the bottom of

their hearts they murmur against a resolution which it is their business to applaud, however faintly. But men accustomed to breathe the air of a free country employ, in measuring human actions, compasses that are not in use among sycophants and valets.

On the other hand, England has joyfully welcomed the hope of the yet more complete return of the Imperial Government to the principles of the constitutional system.

Not that the English are so infatuated with a theoretical love of this system, as to pant for its triumph everywhere. France—and it makes me proud to belong to such a country—France is perhaps the only nation in the world capable of loving truth and justice for themselves, "independently of their consequences. Nothing of the kind here. Between the English mind and the Absolute there is an impassable barrier. This country is, before all others, the fatherland of the Relative. And it is precisely for that reason, that the existence among us of whatever resembles absolute power is odious in its eyes.

One day, I was discussing with a distinguished member of the House of Commons the treaty of commerce concluded between France and England, and the close bonds with which it would unite the two nations. "Look here!" said he, with much animation. "It is of no use for the French Government to sign treaties which seem dictated by the very genius of peace; it is of no use for it to multiply its assurances of friendship; it is of no use for it to join its armies to ours in remote expeditions, and to give the union of flags as a pledge of the union of interests—so long as the prodigious resources of France, its treasures and its armies, are at the disposal of one man; so long as that man shall hold, as it were, in the hollow of his hand the whole power of the most enterprising and most military nation in the world, let him expect to behold in the English people an adversary, perhaps concealed, but fatally suspicious. And how, indeed, can you expect that we should sleep in peace when we know that a wave of the hand, or a nod of the head, is all that is wanted to set in motion, within twenty-four hours, half a million of soldiers, and in one hour to call forth from the bosom of a profound calm a disastrous war? Do not answer me by considerations derived from the personal character of the poten-

tate who rules your destinies. Do not remind me of his well-understood interests, his well-known prudence. Whoever is invested with unbounded power, is the slave of his own power. This was said by Spinoza, and history says the same thing with yet greater authority than Spinoza. It is not a man who is brought into court, but a situation, and it does not need to be a great philosopher to know that situations are stronger than men. This is what men of the higher order of mind in England understand, and what the people feel by instinct. You have an almost fabulous army: if it be kept on foot with a view to war, we have good reason to be on our guard; if with a view to internal tranquillity, what a perilous importance is given to the soldier! And who can assure us that he will never chance to abuse it? What bread and public amusements are for a mob in plain clothes, war is for a mob in uniform. A soldier, at the bottom, is a gambler; his stake is his life; how can you satisfy a gambler by obstinately refusing him the cards? Besides, one inconvenience of too absolute power is to awaken in the public expectations proportioned to the force it has resigned, so that inaction, no matter how reasonable, becomes a source of danger. Did not a man who knew you Frenchmen well, and who was not ignorant of the conditions on which despotism prolongs its duration, once say, 'Every three months something new must be given to the French?' We have not forgotten this epigram. Thus, in whatever manner we regard the question, we find that we have to deal with the unforeseen, and we are condemned to be incessantly in fear of the spectre described by Victor Hugo, 'a spectre ever armed, that follows us side by side, and which is named To-morrow.' Thence our levies of Volunteers; thence our zeal to encourage homicidal inventions; thence our eagerness to fortify ourselves; thence the passionate interest we take in the equipment of our fleets. But all that costs money. The burden of our taxes increases beyond all bounds. The nation learns to curse a peace which is as ruinous as a war, and each time the poor man hears the footsteps of the tax-collector, he looks towards France with an air of irritation."

This language on the part of my companion was only the anticipated development of one of the*most remarkable passages in M. Fould's Memoir. Yes, as the new Finance

Minister has well said, in renouncing the power of disposing at a given moment, and without any intermedium, of all the resources of a great nation,—“a power more apparent than real, more menacing than efficacious,”—the Chief of the State in France will have entered upon the only system capable of calming the disquietude of Europe.

No wonder, if England has joyfully greeted the promises implied in this renunciation. It is like an enormous weight that had been lying on her heart, and from which she suddenly feels herself relieved. At the same time, we must not deceive ourselves, a large measure of distrust still mingles with the general satisfaction. Some ask themselves if the system of transfers, taken up with sequence and dexterity, will not furnish the ruling power with the means of seizing afresh, in an underhand manner, upon what it has abandoned. Others say, with the *Times*, “We remember too well the disappointment which followed M. de Persigny’s pompous professions of faith on the subject of the liberty of the press, not to distinguish carefully between promises and performances.” (*Times*, 15th November, 1861.) In general, the change in question is not considered as having an altogether satisfactory significance, until it has been followed by the changes that are its natural corollary, such as ministerial responsibility, the organisation of an effective system of public control, and, above all, the liberty of the press by the substitution of trial by jury for *avertissements*. The misgivings and distrust of the English people can only be dispersed at that price.

To suppose that France is incapable of liberty; that she is to be rendered happy without having a voice in the matter, and that if her ruler allows the right of discussion, it must be after the manner of those fathers of families who, disliking a noise, make their children a present of a drum, on condition that they do not beat it—that will do for the *Constitutionnel*. But the English hold France in higher esteem than do the Frenchmen of the *Constitutionnel*. They judge it capable and worthy of liberty.

And, moreover, they think that absolute power is an armour the weight of which overwhelms him whom it imprisons; that there is more courage in making that acknowledgment than in exclaiming, “The King will not surrender

his sword ;" and that force, in the wide sense of the word, cannot consist in causing noble-hearted men to keep aloof.

LETTER XLI.

RIVALRY BETWEEN ENGLISH AND AMERICANS.

December 2nd, 1861.

THE writers of news-letters, especially of weekly news-letters, have an awkward competitor in the electric telegraph, that invisible postilion born in fairy-land, and for whom to arrive before starting is but child's play. How late do I come to tell you of the insult offered by Captain Wilkes to the flag of Great Britain ! And yet of what can I speak to you, if not of an event which occupies every man's mind here, forms the subject of every conversation, and agitates every heart ?

What a fearful explosion of wrath, when, on Wednesday last, this news was spread abroad : "The flag of Great Britain has been insulted!" A spark thrown upon a train of gunpowder produces a no more decisive effect,—in the twinkling of an eye, public opinion was on fire. The Clubs overflowed with visitors animated by a sort of thrilling curiosity. A veritable tempest broke over the Royal Exchange. In the general indignation there was mingled something of a haughty astonishment. What ! England insulted on her own grand domain, the sea ! And to make matters worse, the challengers were those Americans from whose hands England had had for years past to swallow so many affronts ! Were the Americans ignorant, then, that the patience of a great nation has its limits ? Were they ignorant that those who are in no haste to draw the sword are sometimes those who, when the sword is once drawn, fling the scabbard far away ?

In this manner did the less impassioned express themselves ; and I have seen the pallor of emotions which belong to youth diffuse itself over faces crowned by white hair. Meeting in the street a clergyman of my acquaintance, a man,

be it said, of great talent, and, as a preacher, much run after, "Well?" said I. "Well!" he replied, without allowing me to finish, "my vote is for war, and I would gladly be the first to shoulder a musket. Quite long enough have these bullies been threatening us. There must be an end to it!"

Had the captain of the *San Jacinto* boarded the *Trent*, and carried off Messrs. Mason and Slidell, with formalities of a nature to soften down what was violent in such a proceeding! But the circumstances of this act, such as they appear in print—the *San Jacinto* presenting herself to the *Trent* in the position of a ship about to let fly a broadside; Lieutenant Fairfax and his men arriving with a cutlass in one hand and a pistol in the other; the order given to the English captain to proceed on board the American man-of-war, an order that would have disgraced him had he obeyed it; all that—until it be shown, of which there is little chance, that the report is exaggerated—fully explains the sensation produced, a sensation more easy to state as a fact than fully to describe; and which, I fear, will long survive the event that has given rise to it. But, as you have justly observed, the more vivid the first impression, the more grave and solemn has been the attitude of the English people since that first impression faded. It has said, by the mouth-piece of nearly all its journals: "Before rashly doing anything, let us see if the law is in our favour; because respect for the law, which places a salutary check on the outburst of passion in individuals, saves nations from still more dangerous outbursts. Is the act from which we suffer in conformity with the regulations of international law? Let the law officers of the Crown examine the question with calmness, and pronounce. If we are not, from a strictly legal point of view, authorised to exact reparation, we shall have that courage of resignation which goes so well with strength; if, on the other hand, reparation be due to us, we will demand it, and, in the event of refusal, we will remember Nelson's signal: "England expects that every man will do his duty."

It is not easy to conceive language more noble, or an attitude of higher bearing. Whoso loves liberty, ought to rejoice in seeing a free people afford such a spectacle.

But is there anything to be surprised at in it? No. Where public opinion, in fact, is supreme; where each indi-

vidual throws his own weight into the scale of the affairs of the community; where that which interests all is the business of all, it comes to pass, and ought naturally to come to pass, that every citizen ceases to consider himself as answerable to himself alone for his passions and opinions.

What can be more likely to raise the moral standard than this sentiment of high responsibility universally diffused? What has rendered, in the circumstance under review, the language of the English press so worthy and so moderate, is the idea it entertains of its influence. It feels that it would be accountable for any mishaps that might ensue from its transports of anger, and it, therefore, takes care to restrain itself. Less free, it would be less powerful; less powerful, it would have less comprehended the necessity of being discreet. Its discretion, a thing to be admired, has been the result of its liberty.

What is still better is, that the English press in this national crisis has displayed a spirit of equity to which the extraordinary excitement of the moment imparts a character of greatness. "We recall to mind," writes the *Saturday Review*, "that we, too, in our time, have rudely trampled under foot the rights of neutrals, and, in our quality of a belligerent nation, have committed acts which, even if they could be justified on the score of strict legality, would be condemned by the sentiment of modern times." To appeal to the moderation of a people, by placing before its eyes its own faults in former times, is to render it an homage, the extent of which only those are capable of estimating whom liberty has nourished with her lusty milk.

With reference to the conclusion arrived at by the law officers of the Crown, I have nothing more to tell you—the London Journals having anticipated me. You are aware that the English lawyers have declared contrary to the law of nations the capture of Messrs. Mason and Slidell by an American man-of-war, on board a merchant vessel protected by the English flag; that a despatch has consequently been sent to Lord Lyons, containing a demand for satisfaction; and that on the answer made to that demand depends the question whether or not war shall blaze out between the Old World and the New.

Many persons here are ready to face the aspect of such a

war, so much is their blood heated; but the prospect of the calamities to be foreseen fills with emotion those with whom the understanding governs the passions.

However formidable may be the naval force of the English, their mercantile marine is so considerable, so dispersed over such numerous regions of the globe, and requires a protection so extensive and manifold, that, in the event of a conflict, England must expect, happen what may, to encounter great and lamentable losses. It is the weakness of force to present many vulnerable points when, instead of being concentrated around itself, it invades space.

Would war restore the supply of cotton to England, as a compensation for the interruption of her commercial relations with the Americans of the North? It may be doubted. Who can say to what extremities the Federal Government would not be capable of proceeding when, attacked in this quarter by the South, in that quarter by the English, it grew maddened with the madness of despair? Who can affirm that the excess of the danger would not impel it to seek a last resource in giving over the institution of slavery to wrath and vengeance; that is to say, in arming the slaves against their masters, which would be striking the English by the henceforth definitive extinction of the cotton cultivation in the Southern States, and the Southern planters by the abolition of slavery, confided to the genius of extermination? One shudders at the very idea of the horrors which certain combinations would be apt to engender.

And what a part for England to play, whose name is united to the abolition of slavery by an indissoluble bond, would that be which should lead her to crush the Northern States for the benefit of the Southern, and thus to forward the triumph of the fatal principle formerly condemned by herself with such imposing solemnity, and at the price of so many sacrifices! For although the Federal Government has declared, to the great regret of all friends of humanity, that the abolition of slavery was not the motive which armed it against the South; although it has reduced to the dimensions of a territorial dispute a war which it was its interest and its duty to raise to the proportions of a truly holy crusade; although it has alienated, by the narrowly national and purely selfish character imparted to its policy, the universal

sympathies which a generous war-cry would have rallied around its flag, it stands, nevertheless, by the mere force of events, and in despite of its own proclamations, the armed foe of the principle of slavery, and therefore it is the armed foe of the principle of slavery that England would have to combat;—a monstrous result, which her own noblest sons could not look upon without anxiety and sorrow.

Unhappily, there is little hope of this mournful contest being averted. Whether Captain Wilkes has acted with or without instructions, this much is certain that he has acted conformably to the spirit and passions with which his fellow-countrymen are animated towards the English. His conduct, even if it be secretly disapproved by Mr. Lincoln's Government, is only too sure of being applauded by public opinion at New York, and it may be that they will wreath chaplets for him. To humiliate England has always been, for the Yankees, a luxurious and exquisite enjoyment.

But let us be just. Since the rupture of the Union between the North and the South, the North has had no reason to be pleased with the English. Not only have they treated as a belligerent nation what the Federal Government called an army of rebels; not only have they taken up an attitude of political neutrality, in which the Federal Government, that had expected something better, at once saw an insult; but their partiality in favour of the South has, it must be confessed, manifested itself in a most unmistakable manner, and sometimes in a most offensive form. With what ungenerous satisfaction has not the English press always welcomed the news of the checks experienced by the Federal troops! With what complacent veil has it not generally sought to cover the reverses of the Confederates! The English Government has preserved a neutrality; but frankly, has public opinion remained neutral?

Not that the English have the slightest inclination to prop up the odious institution of slavery. Thank Heaven, they have proved the contrary in a sufficiently striking manner to deprive any one of the right of addressing that insult to them; and I am convinced, for my part, that in the eyes of the most enlightened, the most influential portion of the English nation, cotton would weigh nothing if placed in the balance against the emancipation of the negro race. But

that, generally speaking, at each misadventure of the North the English have experienced that sort of malicious satisfaction caused by the sight of a man who, having tried to make you give way, happens to be forced to give way himself before another, stronger or more skilful than himself, must be admitted by whosoever has attentively followed the movement of public opinion in this country.

Thence has arisen on the part of the Northern Americans towards England a feeling of irritation which only wanted an opportunity to give itself full career, and which has accordingly seized the first that occurred.

On the other hand, the demand for reparation does not, I fear, rest upon a right so clearly manifest but that it may be repelled by arguments of at least a specious nature.

Let us recall to mind, first of all, that when the English were at war with France, many inhabitants of the coasts, threatened by the press-gang, took service on board American merchant vessels. What was the consequence? Did not the English claim the right of searching every American vessel suspected of having on board sailors of English origin, and did they not carry off all whom they recognised as such, whether deserters or not? The results are well known. The Americans warmly protested against pretensions which tended to make a simple naval officer a judge in the last resource of the nationality of individuals engaged in the service of a neutral nation, and that without the intervention of any competent tribunal. The English persisted. The dispute became embittered, and finished in an appeal to the sword. The right of visit extended to persons and arbitrarily exercised, is, then, a right which was proclaimed, actively practised and maintained by the English themselves. Only, if the Federal Government claimed the two Southern envoys, Messrs. Mason and Slidell, as *subjects*, there would be this absurdity in the position of the two Governments, that the one would be invoking a right it had always denied, while the other would be denying a right it had always invoked. It is, therefore, scarcely probable that the Federal Government will defend itself on these grounds. But is there no principle on which it can insist with some reason? As was remarked in an article in the *London Review*, a paper edited with much impartiality and loftiness of tone, it is

admitted even by those who stand up the most resolutely for the privileges of neutral flags, that these flags cannot protect either articles contraband of war, or persons engaged, whether by land or sea, in the service of one of the belligerent Powers.

The question then arises, whether the principle which sanctions the capture of persons so situated does not apply to individuals invested as were Messrs. Mason and Slidell, with the title of Southern Commissioners? They give themselves out to be Southern Commissioners, or, in other words, as emissaries of one of the belligerent parties. Had they been surprised carrying despatches, in what respect would that circumstance have been more serious than that which results from a title they have never denied?

It is true, it may be objected that even supposing the right of carrying off these gentlemen to be sustainable, it was not for Captain Wilkes to solve the question peremptorily, and that he ought to have taken the *Trent* into an American port to have had the matter adjudged in a Prize Court. But it must be owned, that the question reduced to these terms loses something of its importance. If the American captain had done what he is accused of having neglected to do; if he had taken the *Trent* to New York, for instance, instead of allowing it to proceed on its voyage, what an irreparable loss would that have been for the proprietors of the vessel! and for the passengers, what an inconvenience! Such a proceeding on the part of the American captain would not have appeared less offensive, but would have caused much more injury.

If an English newspaper speaks after this fashion, you may easily imagine that, in justification of the conduct of one of its officers, the Federal Government will not fail to find arguments more or less plausible.

The fact is, this ill-starred question of the right of search is an inexhaustible source of disputes and conflicts. The Treaty of Paris, of the 16th April, 1856, contains the avowal, but certainly does not furnish any expedient for averting the evil, the existence of which it affirms. I shall ask your permission to examine, in a future letter, if the true remedy does not lie in the proclamation of the free commerce of neutrals, as it seems to me that liberty has power to resolve, in this case, a problem which, like many others, is without her aid incapable of solution.

LETTER XLII.

THE AFFAIR OF THE TRENT.

December 8th, 1861.

WILL France make common cause with England against the Northern States of America, if the latter refuse the reparation demanded?

Such is the question which I have heard asked, and answered in the affirmative, in circles that pique themselves on being well informed.

The thing would be incredible if, unhappily, the language of certain journals in Paris did not tend to justify what I do not hesitate to qualify as the most monstrous of hypotheses.

Only a few days ago the *Times* stated, with childish surprise and satisfaction, that there was in France a journal which, although legitimist, declared England to be in the right, and exhorted her to hold firm. I should never have thought the editors of the *Times* capable of such an excess of simplicity. They have actually taken for a mark of sympathy the calculations of a skilful and profound enmity. Doubtless they would use every effort to ruin, the one by the other, the Northern States of America and England, who carry in their blood a hatred of the ideas which England and America have set in motion.

But do those friends of liberty act consistently who, not content with exciting one of the two nations against the other, seek to compromise France in this disastrous quarrel?

Oh! Mr. Bright better understood the duty imposed upon democrats by the logic of their convictions when, on Wednesday last, at the banquet given to him at Rochdale, he rendered such a solemn homage to the democratic constitution of the United States, and hurled such vehement anathemas against the principle of slavery, alone responsible for the agitations that have shaken it, and for the dangers with which it is threatened at this very moment! It is free to the *Times* to assail with its cold sarcasms an eloquence so proudly disdainful of the puny passions and puny resentments of the passing hour! It is

free to whosoever bends beneath the yoke of such passions and resentments, to stigmatise as un-English the aspirations of a man who seeks the interest of his own country in the triumph of sound principles throughout the earth ! Mr. Bright knows that by the side of, or rather above, that England which is selfish, jealous, encroaching, and always ready to prefer herself even to justice, there is another England which professes the virile worship of liberty, which honours thought in its most diverse manifestations, advances along the path of progress without ever receding a single step, and in her respect for the right of discussion, has raised to human intelligence a throne far loftier than those on which force is seated ! It is of this latter England that Mr. Bright is a citizen. It is her interest and honour which monopolise his patriotism and inspire his eloquence ; and it is because he is English after this magnanimous fashion, that public opinion, when violently excited against him, fails to disturb his mind.

“ Every man endowed with a large heart,” said he, in the course of his speech at Rochdale, “ ought to pray for the day when the vast American continent, having succeeded in forming a Confederation of States, without a numerous army, without a considerable naval force, without internal customs duties, but with liberty everywhere, with equality everywhere, shall thus give us the hope that men are not forsaken of Heaven, and that the future of our race may become better than its past.” That, indeed, is a noble manner of being English, and not a little removed from that mode of being a democrat, which, according to certain French democrats, consists in calling upon England, aided by France, to crush the United States.

Besides, if they who honestly insist that we should make common cause with the English against America, hope thereby to win the hearts of the English, I warn them they are strangely mistaken. Could any Englishman, having blood in his veins, look upon our assistance, under the actual circumstances, as otherwise than an insult ? What ! should we say to England, before the whole world, that we deem her incapable of avenging her own wrongs, against an enemy barely her equal in power, against an enemy that has already on his hands a formidable war ! What ! should we offer a people who are going to fight a duel for a blow they fancy

to have received, to help them to bear the weight of their honour! And we rock ourselves in the hope that they would be grateful to us for a protection so insulting, so humiliating? I venture to affirm, for my part, that an offer of this nature would be only calculated to envenom the sentiments of national rivalry and pride which are a bar to a frank, cordial, and thoroughly sincere alliance between the two countries. I venture to affirm that this offer, were it accepted by the British Government, would make the heart of the English nation bleed for many a year.

Observe, our alacrity to enter upon a quarrel which is none of ours, could not possibly under any aspect have any chance of being favourably interpreted. Some would see in it the effect of an ambition always on the alert, always on the watch for an opportunity of intermeddling with everything, in order to draw a profit out of everything. Others would gladly persuade themselves that the French Government, compelled by its financial embarrassments to mask and postpone its designs, seeks only to lull asleep by artful advances the vigilance of England. Others again would like to think, or would affect to say, that the dominant consideration at the Tuilleries was to punish the Northern Americans for the crime of having accepted the services of two princes of the House of Orleans.

When I speak in this manner, believe me, I have my reasons for doing so, being in a position to interrogate on this subject the feelings of men who not only represent public opinion, but direct it.

Again, it is difficult to conceive how France could ever justify herself in the eyes of posterity for having deliberately gone into one camp while the institution of slavery was in the other. Enough that England should pass through this ordeal, if fated to do so, without France hastening wantonly to anticipate a situation so little enviable. Can it be that for certain individuals the prospect of an easy victory possesses irresistible temptations? It is unquestionable that, with our help, England, which has already so many chances in her favour, would have still greater. But, Heaven be praised for it! it has never been in the habits of France, or agreeable to her character, to espouse the cause of the strong against the weak.

Another point is—and it ought to be known in France—that opinions are likely to be much divided as to the morality and justice of this war, should it break out.

On this side of the Channel, great fuss is being made about the honour of England being trampled under foot. You may read, placarded on every wall, “Outrage on the British Flag.” That is all very fine; but if you seek to render to yourself an exact account of the facts, what do you find? The *Trent* has been subjected to the right of search; agreed. But since when has the right of search, as exercised towards neutral vessels by belligerents, ceased to constitute a part of international rights? It is ridiculous to pretend, as Lord Fermoy did before the electors of Marylebone, that the *Trent* ought to have been respected in her quality of a Queen’s ship; or to invoke on this occasion, as a French paper has done, the principle that the ships of a nation are a part of its territory and should consequently share its inviolability. This principle applies to men-of-war, because these, holding of the sovereignty of the nation to which they belong, are in reality only floating fortresses, and have, therefore, never been regarded as subject to the right of search. But the *Trent*, so far as I know, is not a ship of war; and the proof that every kind of vessel is not allowed to enjoy the privilege of the inviolability which attaches to the territory of an independent nation is, that merchant vessels are subject to the right of search. In exercising this right, Captain Wilkes did nothing that was not in conformity with the laws which regulate such matters; nor can *this* be said to constitute “an outrage on the British Flag.”

Neither does it lie, let them say what they will, in the forms employed. The cannon ball, for instance, fired by Captain Wilkes, has been charged against him as an intentional act of violence and insult. But it is the regular proceeding by means of which a belligerent intimates to the neutral vessel it encounters, the intention to visit her. Here again, Captain Wilkes merely conformed to the laws of maritime legislation.

There remains the abduction of Messrs. Mason and Slidell. But in order that this fact should be looked upon as an intentional outrage, it is not only necessary that, in this respect, Captain Wilkes should have exceeded the limits of

the right of search, but that he should have done so with full knowledge that he was committing an excess; for if it be proved that in going beyond his powers he believed he was acting within them, in what could that error on his part constitute an outrage?

The question is thus reduced to ascertaining if the capture of Messrs. Mason and Slidell is a violation of international law so clear, so evident, so indisputable, that it was impossible for the American captain to be mistaken. Is any one prepared to pass his word for it? The more deeply the question is sounded, the more doubtful does the decision become. What matters it that the law officers of England have declared the capture illegal? Have not the American lawyers declared exactly the reverse? And what stronger proof can there be that the question at issue is one of those sufficiently enveloped in obscurity to allow both parties roundly to resolve it in the sense of their own interests!

When war broke out between the Northern and Southern States, Queen Victoria, you will remember, published a proclamation, in which she warned her loyal subjects that whosoever among them should bethink themselves of transporting for the use and service of either of the belligerents, soldiers, arms, or despatches, would do so at their own risk and peril, that is to say, on the condition of submitting to the penalty attached to the violation of international law. Now, if the right of seizing an enemy's despatches does not imply that of seizing his emissaries, and if an importance be assigned to dead despatches which is refused to living despatches, it must be confessed that maritime legislation greatly needs to be put in accordance with logic!

An Englishman, Chancellor Kent, laid it down as an axiom, "That a war between two nations is a war between all the individuals who compose the one and all the individuals who compose the other." It would be curious to know how Chancellor Kent would judge, setting out from the principle laid down by himself, in the case of the capture on board a neutral vessel of two men, not only forming part of one of the nations at war, but charged with messages bearing upon the prolongation of the strife.

Chancellor Kent says in another place: "The great principles of national law require that in time of war the property

of an enemy should preserve its hostile character in the act of being transported." One may ask why, if in the act of being transported, an enemy's *property* preserves this hostile character, an enemy's *person* should lose it?

In the Report presented to the King by Sir George Lee, Dr. Paul, Sir Dudley Ryder, and Mr. Murray, afterwards Lord Mansfield, it is said: "An enemy's merchandise on board a friendly vessel may be captured." Why only his merchandise?

Lord Stowell, in the case of the *Caroline*, expressed himself as follows: "You may exercise your war right wherever the character of hostility exists. You may arrest on his passage the ambassador of your enemy." Can anything more decisive be imagined?

So much for the English authorities, as they are quoted and invoked by an organ of the English press. How would it be if, to cut the knot, the opinion of the American juris-consults was asked? One of them, George Sumner, has just made known his own, and his conclusions may be easily divined. He recalls to mind that, during the war of the American Revolution, Henry Laurens, previously President of Congress, was sent as Minister to Holland with the mission of negotiating a loan and the recognition of the independence of America; that he embarked on board a Dutch packet-boat, the *Mercury*; that the packet-boat was stopped on the way, and Laurens conveyed to England, where he was imprisoned in the Tower as guilty of high treason. Between the case recalled by George Sumner and that of Messrs. Mason and Slidell there is a striking analogy. The publication of his letter in the English journals has, accordingly, created a great sensation. Attempts at refutation, as you may imagine, have not been wanting. Some will have it that the *Mercury* was not a Dutch ship; others admit that she was a Dutch ship, but laden with articles contraband of war; others again, that, unlike the *Trent*, she was taken before a Prize Court, tried, and condemned. All that may be; but, on the occasion alluded to, Mr. Laurens was seized in the *Mercury* before judgment, treated as contraband of war, taken to London, and imprisoned in the Tower. After all, this much is not denied. The example remains, then, with the lesson it contains.

But, in fact, of what avail are these narrow disputes? How far will they go, who thus make war between two great nations depend on attorneys' chicanery, or on scholastic sophistries? Is it true, or not, that if there is a nation in the world that has violated neutrality, tyrannised over the ocean, abused the right of search, pushed to an extreme point the practice of fictitious and paper blockades, insulted the flag even of war ships belonging to neutrals, and so inflated the arbitrary list of articles contraband of war as to render the commerce of the entire world the victim of a quarrel between two powers, that nation is the English? And is it, or is it not true, that it is America who, in conjunction with Franco, has the most constantly and most energetically defended against England the dignity of nations of limited maritime influence, the franchise of peaceful commerce, the independence of flags, the rights of neutrals, and the liberty of the seas? At the present day, even, does not the violent susceptibility betrayed by the cry everywhere uttered, "Outrage on the British Flag!" proceed from a sentiment too haughty for England to avow, but too dear to her pride to be departed from? The time, indeed, is passed when Selden, in his *Mare Clausum*, exhausted every kind of sophistry to establish the proprietary right of the English over the sea, that highway of nations. The time is passed when Charles I. charged Carleton, his ambassador at the Hague, to complain to the States General against Grotius, and to demand that an example should be made of the audacious author of *Mare Liberum*. In our days, let us hope, there would be some difficulty in understanding a manifesto such as that in which William III. reproached Louis XIV. with having violated the sovereignty of the Crown of England on the British seas. But the changes which the general state of things has introduced into the world have, I fear, but feebly influenced pretensions still resting on a formidable naval force, on swarms of intrepid sailors, and on immense Colonial possessions. Hence the impossibility for England to suffer with calmness that any one should turn upon herself the consequences of the right of search, and should apply to her the theory which she herself has so loudly proclaimed, so perseveringly maintained, and so roughly carried out. There is in the feeling of indignation excited

here by the affair of the *Trent*, something of the anger of a sovereign to whom one of his subjects has presumed to be wanting in respect. It is England's affair to see how far this feeling sanctions her entering upon proceedings in which she must journey side by side with murder. In any case, it is not for France to act as her second in such a quarrel.

May it be averted! Above all, may it be averted by the mediation of France, who, if she interferes at all, can only do so after this noble fashion!

I took up my pen to examine the basis on which reposes international right, making liberty my standing point—a standing point, be it parenthetically remarked, which was recently indicated by Mr. Cobden in a letter relative to the Rochdale banquet—but, behold! I have arrived at the end of my paper without having even touched upon the question which I was anxious to fathom. It must be at some future time, if you will permit me.

Just now I named Selden. Is it not singular that the device of the author of the *Mare Clausum* should be “Liberty above all.” A noble device! It honours Selden, and condemns his book. From its depths will issue, sooner or later, the pacific solution of a problem which at present, as we see only too clearly, is a problem filled with blood.

LETTER XLIII.

DEATH OF PRINCE ALBERT.

December 16th, 1861.

THE day before yesterday, at midnight, the great bell of St. Paul's announced to the English the death of a prince, husband of their queen, and father of their future king.

In countries where the spirit of a courtier in some creates the spirit of servility in others, the death of the great ones of the earth gives rise to conventional mourning, to fashionable tears, to despair in good taste,—but it is not so in free countries: there, when the dead are lamented, it is their life

which is thought of, not their rank, and it is easy to believe in the sincerity of such sorrow.

The regrets awakened here by the death of Prince Albert are genuine and profound, and will leave their mark: first of all, because of the affection borne to the Queen; and secondly, because of the sympathies entertained for the Prince himself.

In losing him, the Queen loses at once the most devoted of her advisers, the surest guide of her children, the faithful companion of her life, and the whole joy of her soul. Such is the feeling of every one; and in this Queen, who will henceforth find herself so cruelly isolated on one of the first thrones in the world, they grieve for the mother, for the wife, for the woman. It is not long since her mother quitted her for ever—now it is her husband. How the heart must bleed that receives, one after the other, two wounds! And such wounds!

No doubt it is one of those mournful desolations of which the character, alas! is in no way exceptional. Such hours of anguish are known in the hovel as in the palace, and calamities of this kind are not less touching for being obscure. But what explains the emotion of the public in this case, is the attachment with which Victoria, in her quality of Queen, has succeeded in inspiring the English people. They lament over her because she suffers, but also because they love her. And why do they love her? Because, independently of all the domestic virtues, she has given the example of that great public virtue which consists, on the part of a constitutional sovereign, in never passing beyond the limits of one's power, and in never considering oneself but as the first servant of all.

It is also under this aspect that Prince Albert deserved to be regretted, and is regretted.

What a difficult position was his! Reduced to being nothing but the Queen's husband, ought he to take a part in public affairs, or abstain from them? In the former case, he ran the risk of incurring the reproach of ambition, and of arming against himself every mind given to suspicion. In the latter case, he might be accused of selfishness; and, besides, what became of his dignity, enwrapped to such a degree in prudence?

To affirm that he always followed the straight line between

these two shoals would be saying too much. He was suspected of meddling, underhand, with things which were not within his province. For instance, he was thought to exercise over the conduct of military matters a secret influence which was justified neither by his position nor by his special knowledge of the subject. However, if it be taken into consideration that the Queen had absolute confidence in him; that he was naturally her most intimate counsellor; and that, under the empire of his counsels, Queen Victoria proves to have been more faithful to her constitutional rôle than any of the former sovereigns called to the throne, there must be accorded to Prince Albert the merit of a rare discretion and of sustained sagacity.

It is, undoubtedly, the defect and peril of constitutional monarchies that they give too much to be wished for by the monarch, while seeming not to give him enough. Royalty without thought, without movement, without initiative, without real life, may become very difficult to be endured by the titular chief if he be a man of talent, and impossible if he be a man of genius. There are those, I know, who think it most desirable that the first place in the State should never be left vacant, the State being the aim of every intrigue, and the glittering object of all ambitions; but, admitting all that, the problem is far from being solved. For whether or not there be any advantage in placing metaphorically a statue upon the throne, considered as a niche to be occupied without interruption, the question remains—Will the statue consent to refrain from all movement when it happens to be a living statue? Whoso has much, is strongly tempted to wish for more; and Sancho Panza himself took a disgust to his sovereignty on the day when the Physician came to tell him, at his dinner hour, “ You must not eat of this dish, nor of that, nor of that.”

What was the reign of Louis Philippe, but an eighteen years' struggle to attain to personal government? The effort failed; but it is not certain that France would have put up with a royalty that meant no more than a sum of twelve millions consumed by one individual.

It is true that in England the conditions are different, royalty being able to exist there as a *symbol*, because it corresponds to a powerful aristocracy; because it represents the principle of primogeniture and entail,—that is to say, the

principle upon which the edifice of English society is made to rest; because, lastly, it is upheld by the sentiment of the hierarchy, more reverenced in England than in any other country in the world. And yet not even England has failed to furnish examples of the difficulty I have indicated—witness the reign of George III., which, like that of Louis Philippe, was one long contest sustained by the Crown, impatient to enlarge the circle of its prerogatives, and to break its constitutional manacles.

It cannot be denied, therefore, that Prince Albert must have possessed much self-abnegation not to have urged the Queen to transgress the prescribed limits, and to have placed a curb on his own desires. And this is the more remarkable, because Prince Albert was far from being an ordinary man. His understanding, cultivated at an early age and with care, had borne precious fruits. He was master of an extensive and varied information. From the speeches which he delivered on many occasions, it is clear that his was a thinking mind; and his eloquence, somewhat cold but always full of matter, assuredly lost nothing by being here and there lighted up by the reflections of German philosophy. He loved the arts, and protected them; he busied himself with agriculture; upon the developments of which the industrial arts and sciences are capable, he entertained views as sound as they were elevated. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was in part his work, and his name will remain indissolubly connected with that of 1862.

By the high aristocracy, if I am correctly informed, he was only half liked. They accused him of a haughtiness bordering on disdain—a grave fault in the world of pride!

However that may be, the death of Prince Albert—a terrible blow to the Queen, whose happiness it destroys, and whose health it threatens,—is at this moment for the English people the subject, I repeat, of a very sincere and very well grounded affliction.

This event, for which one was scarcely prepared by the reports of the medical men, throws an additional veil of gloom over the forthcoming season. Farewell to drawing-rooms, balls, concerts, splendid soirées! Farewell to the profits on which dealers in articles of luxury were wont to reckon! Will the Exhibition, expected in the coming year,

now take place? Some doubt it, and are disposed to believe that it will be put off. As it is, after all, a private undertaking, it is certain that it will be adjourned if the Queen express, or only allow it to be guessed that she entertains, such a wish.

LETTER XLIV.

THE RIGHT OF THE STRONGEST.

December 16th, 1861.

At the very moment the English are putting on mourning for Prince Albert, they have received the news that the Congress of the Northern States has voted thanks to Captain Wilkes, and that his conduct has been approved by the Admiralty, to which he is subordinate. Although these two facts are not of a decisive character, it cannot be dissembled that they are of a nature rudely to shake the confidence of those who believe in peace, "while penetrating with sadness those who pray for it. Neither is the tone of the Message, published to-day in the papers, at all encouraging. The affair of the *Trent*, indeed, is not mentioned; but there is, unhappily, more than a covert menace in the sentence which seems to foresee a foreign war as a consequence of the civil war. What will happen? The future is henceforth open to every supposition, to every fear.

In the letter, in which he apologised for not being able to be present at the banquet offered to his friend, Mr. Bright, by the inhabitants of Rochdale, Mr. Cobden recalls to mind:—

That more than five years ago the government of the United States proposed to the European powers to declare free from seizure by ships of war, private property crossing the seas;

That, as stated in the Message of President Pierce, this proposition was well received by Russia and France, but rejected by the English government;

That, in doing so, the Ministry acted contrary to the unanimous opinion of the Chambers of Commerce of England;

That, at a later date, Mr. Buchanan's government, widening the question, proposed to abolish blockades as far as trading ports are concerned; but that, this time again, the English government refused to listen to anything of the kind.

Suppose that it had been otherwise; suppose that, instead of being rejected, the offer made by the United States had been accepted by England, would the commerce of the English with the ports of the Southern States be interrupted at the present day? And would the civil war which has broken out on the other side of the ocean have become for Lancashire the source of the sacrifices which are now imposed upon it? This is what Mr. Cobden asks in the letter to which I have alluded, and to this question only one reply is possible.

It is with regret that I find myself obliged to recall to your mind that when, two years ago, the House of Commons had to examine the point how far it would answer to declare the private property of belligerents exempt from seizure, Lord John Russell did not scruple to say: "If such a principle came to prevail, there would be an end to the power which has rendered Great Britain so formidable at sea."

What does that signify? Is the right of the strongest, then, the ~~only~~ right? Hounslow-heath policy! It is by making this right of the strongest the foundation of her theories in matters of maritime legislation that England has brought upon herself complications which risk being undone at the cost of much bloodshed. If war break out, will England's past be innocent of the calamities of her future?

LETTER XLV.

THE WAR MANIA.

December 22nd, 1861.

ENGLAND wishes for war. This, I regret to say, is the conclusion I have formed from all that I see and hear. As I mentioned in a former letter, there are men of a lofty intelligence who dread this conflict and measure its sinister bearings.

I have already spoken to you of a very fine and noble speech by Mr. Bright; and you yourself the other day made known to your readers Mr. Cobden's opinion, such as it is propounded in his recent letter. But it is too true that the demon of war has mastered mind and soul. People do more than prepare for it, more than look forward to it with calmness; generally speaking, they await it with impatience, they summon it, they will have it.

One of the latest numbers of *Punch* represents John Bull at table with his family. Enter Jonathan, carrying a flag drooping over his right shoulder, a huge sabre by his side, and pistols at his belt. He comes to search for rebels. The women and the children are alarmed, and open their eyes wide. John (Lord Russell), the man-servant, trembles with rage, and advances with clenched fists towards the stranger. But John Bull, without otherwise disturbing himself, says: "Rebels? Ah! really! John, look to the plate, and run for a policeman."

Punch's witty and sarcastic pencil has only too well expressed in this scene both the sense of scornful security, and the attitude of England towards America. Need I reveal the secret of these warlike dispositions? That is a secret which everybody knows. For a long time past the English have been anxious to humble the Americans. For a long time past they have viewed with uneasiness a power, a rival of their own, developing itself on the other side of the ocean, and doing so in gigantic proportions. For a long time past they have followed with an anxious eye the progress of the American mercantile marine. For a long time past the English aristocracy has grieved over the inconvenient splendour cast by institutions which condemned it. But so long as the United States remained the United States, to attack them would have been dangerous. At last a golden opportunity has been found. The English have the wind right aft, and they say to themselves: "Let us hasten to seize the propitious hour; who knows if it will return!"

The *Times* yesterday launched forth into solemn lamentations that man is not the master of his own destiny; and that England, provoked in every possible manner by America, had not succeeded, after prodigies of patience, in averting the fatality of a war which, to listen to her

great organ, she will be compelled to undergo in spite of herself.

This does, indeed, resemble a bad joke. That the Americans have for many long years done wrong to England; that they have affected on many an occasion to treat her with a haughtiness as misplaced as it was offensive; that they have taken a sort of pleasure in abusing her tolerance;—all that is indisputable, and in that respect England's resentment is just. But it is a mockery to attribute to the fraternal sympathies of England for America, the result of a cold and prudent policy. The patience of the English, so long as the North and South remained united, is explained by the immense interest they had not to lose their cotton, and by the fear of affronting a contest the issue of which was doubtful. They knew perfectly well that if their naval force was unequalled, the mercantile marine of the United States was the first in the world. They recalled to mind that at the time of the war of 1812, the Americans had only to equip their numerous vessels as cruisers, to inflict enormous losses on England, and to strike a terrible blow at her commerce. They had still present to their memory the capture, by American privateers, of upwards of thirteen hundred vessels of one kind and another within the space of three years. And even the thought of the changes introduced into naval warfare by steam gave them little confidence, because, after all, steam has not yet quite put down the wind; and if America is poor in coal, she is rich in skilful ship-builders, in daring adventurers, and intrepid buccaneers. But now the situation is not the same. The American people have come to tearing out their bowels with their own hands, and the English naturally see in this circumstance an opportunity of attaining, without too much peril, an end which until the present time prudence had enjoined them to veil. Moreover—and this is a decisive consideration—in waging war against America when she was united, they must have bidden farewell to cotton; whilst in waging war against America divided, they have some chance of renewing with the Southern States, relieved from blockade, a connection, the interruption of which is hateful to them.

In his letter on the affair of the *Trent*, George Sumner reminded the English, with some bitterness, that shortly after

the rupture between the North and the South, the British flag had been cruelly insulted in the port of Savannah; that the captain of an English vessel, named Vaughan, guilty in the eyes of the South of having given a dinner to a stoker, a man of colour, had been seized on board his vessel, torn from the arms of his wife, and, after being tarred all over, had been rolled in feathers. That was a case, if ever there was one, of showing what the susceptibility of a great nation was capable of doing. Why was the British honour less sensible of this outrage, coming from the South, than of that which has since been done to it on the part of the North? The reason is easily divined.

Let it not be sought, then, to mislead the opinion of the world as to the character of the conflict, if unfortunately it should break out. Let there be no assumption of an ostentatious generosity. The truth is, that England had for a long time past cherished against the Americans a resentment which the provocations received from the latter rendered legitimate, and had taken umbrage at the rapid development of their power. The opportunity waited for, the pretext desired, having been supplied by the abduction of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, it would be a pity to lose the chance. To avenge at one stroke all the insults of the past, to open a path to the cotton fields, to assert in the eyes of the whole world the inviolability of that British flag which is accustomed to the respect of the ocean, and to give the finishing blow to a formidable power in the most favourable circumstances for attacking it—all that was very tempting and has acted forcibly on the national instinct.

If, then, it happened that without any mediation being offered, North America were to ask of England as the condition of setting Messrs. Mason and Slidell at liberty, a frank and definite consecration of the independence of the seas, it would be absurd to imagine that England would for an instant lend an ear to such a proposition.

And it is precisely for this reason that the offer of mediation on the part of a power so considerable and so influential as France, would have been in the highest degree desirable. For, if the question had ever so little taken this turn, the affair of the *Trent*, which has caused so many painful emotions, and given rise to such melancholy forebodings, might

have been ranked among the happiest accidents of history, and never would a more real, or a more durable, advantage have sprung out of a passing calamity.

However, the time, perhaps, is not badly chosen for directing to what at present forms the basis of the law pompously styled *international law*, the attention of those who see in history something more than a panorama. If such be also your opinion, I shall beg for space in your columns for some reflections touching the necessity of a revision of maritime legislation, suggested by the event about which so much disturbance has been made, and from which may spring so many calamities.

LETTER XLVI.

THE LIBERTY OF THE SEAS AND ENGLAND.

December 24th, 1861.

In his book on the "Rights and Duties of Neutrals," M. Hautefeuille says:—"From this, that every nation is free and independent of every other nation—a principle indisputable, undisputed, and recognised by all men—there flows this necessary consequence, as absolute as the principle itself, that every nation can exchange its superfluities and trade with whom it pleases to choose to make this exchange, this trade, without having recourse to the sanction of a third nation. The only condition which it is bound to fulfil, is the consent of the other contracting party."—(Discours Préliminaire, p. 6.)

It is strange and—why should I not say so?—a matter of regret, that after having in this manner propounded the principle in a work otherwise very remarkable and dedicated to liberty, M. Hautefeuille should not have concluded purely and simply in favour of the free commerce of neutrals in time of war as well as in time of peace, but should have felt himself obliged to admit, under the title of "Duties of Neutrality," restrictions irreconcilable with that independence of nations

which he begins by proclaiming, and which he proclaims in a fashion so precise.

That neutrality imposes duties, I do not deny; but in what do those duties consist? They consist, on the part of the neutral nation, in not taking any part whatever in the quarrel which subsists between the two belligerent nations, and consequently in conducting herself towards them, after the breaking out of the war, in the same manner that she did before that event; nothing less, but nothing more.

Does the fact of furnishing arms to one of the belligerent nations—I purposely select the apparently strongest example in justification of the system that restricts the liberty of neutrals—does this fact constitute a violation of neutrality, and ought arms in consequence to be declared contraband of war?

All the authorities who have written on the law of nations have, I believe, answered in the affirmative, from Selden to Grotius, from Puffendorf to Vattel and Hubner, from Lampredi to M. Hautefeuille. But let us see, for all that.

I will suppose two nations opposed to one another, of whom the one has no need to import from abroad weapons of war; the other, on the contrary, being in the habit of receiving them from a third nation in the way of trade. If this third nation suddenly ceases to supply the second with what it was accustomed to receive, and which is more necessary to it than ever, is it not evident that the second nation is cruelly wronged, to the advantage of the first? Is it not evident that this is, as it were, disarming it in presence of the enemy? Is it not evident that in such a case the neutral nation is forced, under the pretext of observing the duties of neutrality towards one of the two belligerent parties, to violate these same duties towards the adverse party? Is it not evident that, by the simple fact of the interruption of relations, so prejudicial to the latter, the neutral nation mixes itself up, indirectly it is true, still quite positively, with a quarrel to which it ought to remain foreign? Nor is this all. Everything in this world has its own logic,—the system of restrictions like the rest. The grand mistake made by those who, like M. Hautefeuille, have put themselves forward as the champions of the liberty of the seas, is in not carrying far enough the generous ardour of their convictions. Their grand mistake has been in seeking to limit a right which they

ought to have denied altogether, and in disputing about the conclusion after having imprudently admitted the premisses.

“We are ready,” say they, “to recognise in belligerents the right of stopping, in neutral vessels, as contraband of war, whatever is a direct means of making war, of injuring the enemy, and of combating him. But we ask that the line should be drawn there, in the name of the right of neutrals, in the name of the liberty of the seas.” Unfortunately, the restrictive system once adopted, how easy it is to refute the reasonings of those who insist on its being limited to meet their wishes!

If, for example, cannons, muskets, and swords be declared contraband of war, why not declare equally contraband corn, flour, and alimentary substances forming the necessities of life? If it is violating the duties of neutrality to place one of the belligerents in a position to fire a shot, why should it not be a violation of those duties to place it in a position to subsist? Before being able to fight, is it not necessary first of all to subsist? Are objects of first necessity for war, in a prolonged struggle, of more importance than objects of first necessity for existence? In the act of striking at a foe, is the sword of greater moment than that which imparts to the arm strength to wield it? Does not hunger kill as surely as cannon, though in a different manner? In fact, it matters little whether the means of injuring an enemy be *direct*, or *indirect*! Is the means *effective*—yes or no? That is the real question. A town is besieged: the besiegers, unable to carry it by assault, seek to reduce it by famine, and succeed. It would, surely, be very absurd if we were told that, as the place was taken in an *indirect* manner, it goes for nothing!

When England, in 1794, being at that time in arms against France, prohibited all trade in articles of food, and issued orders to her cruisers to stop all vessels laden with grain or flour, and bound for France, the neutral Powers uttered loud clamours, and they were fully justified in doing so from the point of view of the liberty of the seas, as that ought to be understood. But the principle once admitted that this liberty can and ought to be subordinated to a belligerent’s right to prevent an enemy from putting himself in a condition to injure him, what answer was there to be made to the English

when they said: "France is perishing of hunger. We have reason to believe that we shall force her by famine to demand or accept peace. Carrying food to her is furnishing her with means of continuing the war; it is giving her the possibility of injuring us, of opposing us; it is a violation of the laws of neutrality; and therefore we shall not allow it"? In what respect would England's line of argument have been more cogent, or more conclusive, if applied to arms instead of to provisions?

All the distinctions that it has been laboured to establish, in matter of contraband, between munitions of war properly so called, and victuals, repose—to call things by their right names—on arguments that are not arguments. Let us see what M. Hautefeuille has to say:—

"Alimentary substances are necessary in all positions of life, in peace as in war" (Tome ii. p. 136). Agreed, but this has nothing to do with the question at issue.

"They are of still greater use to the peaceable inhabitants, who are the majority, than to the soldiers" (*Ibid.*). I do not deny it; but when a people is at war, the *soldiers* are only the armed representatives of the mass which you designate as the *peaceable inhabitants*. It is for them, and in their name, that the others wield the sword; it is not only the militant section of the nation that is in a state of war, it is the *whole* nation; it is consequently against the *whole* nation that the enemy's efforts are directed; and it often happens that the losses inflicted on the *peaceable inhabitants*, of which it is composed, do more to bring about peace than the victories gained over the *soldiers* employed in its service.

"Alimentary substances can never injure the enemy in a direct manner" (*Ibid.*). Well, what matter, if they injure him as much, or more, in an indirect manner? "They are not susceptible of serving against him" (*Ibid.*). Pardon me, they do serve against him, for without them the other party would not long be in a position to maintain the contest.

Now, is that which holds true with regard to provisions less true as regards gold and silver specie? If it be admitted—and how can it be denied?—that money is the sinews of war; that, in the present stage of civilisation, a nation destitute of money would find it impossible to go to war, what is the use of saying that "gold and silver specie cannot be

employed to strike an enemy, to cause him a wound or death?" (*Hauteville*, Tome ii. p. 374).

And coal, which since the introduction of steamships has become of such absolute necessity in time of war as well as in time of peace, is coal, because it "does not cause a wound," to enjoy the benefit of liberty in preference to swords and muskets?

I, for one, am of opinion, and I will endeavour to prove it, that England—setting aside her feelings in reference to the affair of the *Trent*—is the only nation in the world which, as concerns maritime right, or rather maritime practice, has always reasoned rightly, and drawn from the restrictive system all that the logic of such a system supplies. Condemn the doctrine, and I will applaud; but I require of those who deny the conclusion, that they shall have the moral courage to reject the premisses, and say:—

"In order that neutrals may remain really neutral between two belligerent nations, it is necessary that they should not be obliged to act towards the latter, after war has broken out, differently to what they did before that." The distinctions it is pretended to establish beforehand between what is, and what is not, contraband of war, are irrational. The words *contraband of war* are an invention of the spirit of tyranny, a pretext furnished to the strongest. Trade will not become really free until this great and salutary principle has been definitively recognised, *without any exception*: "The flag covers the cargo," which amounts to defining the sea—and so it ought to be defined—as the great highway of nations.

"The flag covers the cargo" is a principle proclaimed by the Treaty of Paris of the 16th. April, 1856, but with an exception that does away with the principle and reduces it to nothing. To say that "The flag covers the cargo, *with the exception of articles contraband of war*," is leaving the door open to all the difficulties, disputes, and annoyances, which the Treaty no doubt purposed to prevent. They ought to have defined with precision, in the very text of the treaty, what is henceforth and for ever to be considered as contraband of war. Why was it not done? Was it because this might have given rise to great divergency of opinion? That alone would suffice to prove that the problem still remains to be solved.

What is the language of books?

Grotius is of opinion that if, to ensure success, a belligerent is under the necessity of proclaiming the prohibition of gold and silver specie, of iron, copper, or coal, the right it derives from this very necessity justifies it in doing so.

Vattel allows a belligerent the right of stopping supplies of food, if it has any expectation of reducing the enemy by famine.

Hubner ranks in the class of objects contraband of war, not only the broadcloth and linen required for the equipment of the soldiers, but also leather, boots, &c., &c.

Lampredi asks if nations can prevent trade in articles contraband of war, whenever required by the necessity of self-defence? And his answer is: "Not only can they, in such a case, put a stop to this particular branch of commerce, but to every other."

From books let us pass to treaties: what shall we find? Shall we follow the example of M. Hautefeuille (Tome ii. pp. 320, 321), and take for the basis of the maritime law of Europe the Treaties of Utrecht, which enumerate as contraband merchandise whatever is directly useful in war; guns, gunpowder, saltpetre, crossbows, mortars, helmets, cuirasses, pikes, shoulder-belts, &c., &c.? It is undoubted that, as concerns the question under review, these treaties have served as models for many more concluded during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth. But, besides that they have never been received as law by England, the most considerable of the maritime nations, M. Hautefeuille himself cites no fewer than nine treaties which, while extending the contraband of war, sufficiently prove how far the law in these matters is from being settled; to wit, the treaties of 1604 between England and Spain; of 1614 between Sweden and the united provinces of the Low Countries; of 1630 between Spain and England on the one part, and Spain and France on the other; of 1654 between England and Holland; of 1661 between England and Denmark; of 1661 between England and Sweden; of 1742 between Denmark and France; of 1794-95 between England and the United States of America; of the 25th July, 1803, between England and Sweden (Tome ii. p. 328). We must admit that we have here a rule, if such it can be called, terribly broken into by exceptions!

Indeed, M. Hautefeuille does not deny that the difficulty is a very serious one if it be granted that the prohibition takes its source in the jurisprudence arising out of a greater or less number of treaties (Tome ii. p. 328), which he calls "the secondary law," but he fondly persuades himself that the problem is solved by "the primitive law," or that which speaks to the consciences of all men.

It must be acknowledged that, if in the matter under notice, the primitive law has ever spoken to "the universal conscience," the universal conscience has taken little trouble to return an answer; and, in fact, one does not see very clearly how the question of determining whether a nation that wants bread is in a better condition to sustain a war than a nation that wants gunpowder, can be an affair of conscience—either I am greatly mistaken, or else it is simply an affair of argument.

Down to the day of the abduction of the passengers in the *Trent*, England had always professed a doctrine that may be controverted, that may be denounced as containing the germ of the most tyrannical abuses, that may be rejected as leading to the usurpation of the ocean by the strongest, but which has at least the merit of being complete. The principle that serves as a base to this doctrine is enunciated in the following terms, in an essay displaying much research, published some time ago in the *Edinburgh Review* :—

" You have the right of search for what is contraband of war, because the presence of such objects on board a vessel trading with your enemy is a fact that is prejudicial to you. In like manner, you have the right to examine if this vessel has not received your naval deserters, because their desertion is prejudicial to you " (Vol. xl. p. 9).

This is, certainly, clear enough. The doctrine at issue starts from the pretended right possessed by belligerents of preventing what is prejudicial to them.

And who shall be judge? Themselves, unfettered by any rules laid down beforehand, by any sort of precedent.

Hear what the *Metropolitan Encyclopædia* says on this subject, under the head " Neutrality."

" An object can be not contraband of war at a given moment under the empire of *certain circumstances*, and become so at another given moment under the empire of different

circumstances. . . . The question depends entirely upon *circumstances* which it is impossible to foresee or to appreciate beforehand."

Let them not talk, then, about international jurisprudence, about treaties *ex professo*, about precedents. When a case presents itself, whether foreseen or not foreseen, it is to the *circumstances* which characterise it that reference must be made; and if there thence result a fact *prejudicial* to the belligerent, the right of the latter is established!

In the maritime history of the English has practice coincided with this theory? It would be difficult to deny it. No one is ignorant of the extension given by the English to this pretended right of a belligerent to prevent whatever is prejudicial to it. Examples abound.

In 1798, a merchant fleet belonging to Sweden, and convoyed by a frigate, is encountered by an English squadron. The Swedish captain, on being questioned, declares that the vessels are bound for different ports in the Mediterranean, and are laden with hemp, iron, and pitch. This was a fleet belonging to a neutral Power; these were vessels under convoy; these were objects the produce of the country that was exporting them. But England was then at war with France. France had ports in the Mediterranean, and the officer in command of the English squadron cut the knot from the point of view of what was, might be, or seemed to him to be, *prejudicial* to his nation, regard being had to *circumstances*. He did not hesitate, therefore, to stop the Swedish vessels, in spite of the opposition and protests of the captain of the frigate that was convoying them. Not only were those vessels detained, but they were condemned as lawful prize with their cargoes, a proceeding, as is acknowledged by the author of the article above quoted (*Metropolitan Encyclopædia, NEUTRALITY*) "which gave rise to much discussion at the time, and which it is not easy to justify."

Every one knows that ships of war belonging to a neutral Power have always been considered exempt from the right of search, because to look upon them with suspicion would be an insult to the nation they represent; whence the conclusion that the presence of a ship of war ought to protect against all attempt to search the merchant vessels under its convoy. Was this conclusion admitted by the English lawyers in 1801,

when the neutral Powers sought to avail themselves of it? By no means. Their opinion was unanimous as to the right of visiting merchant vessels, even when convoyed. Neither did the English fail to claim its sacredness in their treaty of June 1801 with Russia (Art. IV.), relying on the argument that if a neutral nation fits out ships of war to escort its merchant vessels, there are ample grounds for concluding that it is violating the neutrality. It was the revolutionary *loi des suspects* applied to neutrals!

Needless to recall to mind that it was the extension given by the English to the right of search which brought on between them and the Americans that famous war in which English admirals were known to declare in a state of blockade *all* the coasts of North America!

Certainly when we reflect that the Americans went so far as to make war upon the English, in order to cut short the arbitrary and excessive application of the right of search, we cannot help acknowledging that they are strangely in contradiction with themselves in this unhappy affair of the *Trent*. But, on the other hand, when we remember with what ardour and with what obstinacy England refused to neutral Powers the benefit of the principle, "The flag covers the cargo," we cannot help finding strangely at discord with the general tone of the doctrine which she has hitherto professed, the principles at present invoked by her wounded pride.

In fact, the main argument on which the English rely in the present dispute is this: The rule relative to objects contraband of war, is not applicable in the case of vessels going from one neutral port to another neutral port.

But why so? we are entitled to ask of them. *

Is it because there exists a special convention to that effect between England and America? No one pretends that there is anything of the kind.

Is it because, whether as regards this or any other point, there is a fixed, invariable, universally accepted, international code? It is assuredly not England that would be justified in making such an assertion—England, that has always taken her own way to understand and apply the law of nations.

Is it because it is impossible to conceive what there could be *prejudicial* to a belligerent in objects transported by a vessel that sails from one neutral port to another neutral port?

What? Would the conveyance of so many hundred muskets, for instance, to the Southerners, have been more *prejudicial* to the Northerners than the conveyance from one neutral port to another neutral port of two emissaries, with the avowed mission of exasperating against the latter the two most formidable nations in the world?

Is it because the authority of precedents is wanting? But what is the authority of precedents worth, if "the question depends entirely on circumstances, which it is impossible to foresee, or to appreciate beforehand?"

Those who signed the Treaty of Paris of the 16th of April, 1856, say that the maritime law has given rise, in time of war, to deplorable disputes. They might have added that it has given rise to inconsistencies almost even more deplorable.

But what especially strikes one in the restrictive system, however narrow may be the limits within which it is sought to confine it, is the enormity of the acts of injustice which it involves.

When the commerce of one nation with another consists precisely in what is comprised under the name of contraband of war, in virtue of what principle of justice should the second be compelled to discontinue a "profitable commerce, because it has suited a third nation to seek a quarrel with the first? In virtue of what principle of justice should the consequences of acts which are not their own, be cast upon peaceable and industrious people?

A great deal is said about the inconvenience which might result to one of two belligerent nations from the possibility furnished to the other of procuring the means of making war. But not a word is said about the inconvenience that accrues to the neutral nation from the impediments placed in the way of its commerce and navigation! What excessive solicitude as regards quarrelsome nations, and what excessive indifference as regards industrious countries! How now? It would be unjust to expose you to one of the possible results of a war which is your own affair, and it is just to make me suffer from a war which does not concern me at all. And that is what they call international right!

I will go further. To observe neutrality between two belligerent nations is, I imagine, to abstain from whatever is calculated to turn the scale either to one side or to the other.

Is that, I ask, the end attained by the definition of certain commodities marked beforehand as contraband of war? No: it is precisely the opposite end that is attained. Take two nations entering upon a contest: the one can dispose of a great number of ships of war, the other has very few. Is it not manifest that, in such a case, the right of search, a very real, effective arm in the hands of the former, will be but a delusive weapon in the hands of the latter? For by what means could a nation destitute of ships of war exercise the right of search? By what means could it prevent neutrals from conveying arms to the nation with which it is at war? So far as I am aware, the police service cannot be conducted without a police force; nor can the police of the seas be enforced without a powerful navy. The right of searching, of stopping, and, in certain instances, of confiscating articles comprised under the name of contraband of war, is, then, merely a power created for the benefit of the strongest. And that is the reason why England has always attached so much importance to the consecration of the right of search. That is the reason why she has always sought to extend its application as widely as possible.

And now, if we reflect that the inequality of power among nations is the most common source of unjust wars, for this very simple reason, that people are tempted to be unjust when they can be so with impunity, we shall be compelled to acknowledge that the system which restricts the commerce and navigation of neutrals in time of war, is a lamentable encouragement to unjust wars, on account of the advantage it gives to the strong.

I really wonder why the English have pursued with such loud anathemas the favourite proceeding of the Americans—privateering. Not that it is a practice of which the genius of civilisation can approve. Heaven preserve me from blaming the article in the Treaty of Paris which condemns it! In his *Essai sur les Armateurs*, Martens observes, with good reason, “The privateer owner, indifferent to the fate of the war, and not unfrequently to that of his own country, has no other motive than covetousness, no other recompense in view than his prizes and the price attached by the State to his privileged piracy.” Valin, though predisposed to cry up privateering, does not deny that it is apt to degenerate into abuses.

But, when America is attacked at sea by such a maritime nation as England, the Americans, in arming their vessels as privateers, do nothing else than defend themselves to the best of their power, and by the means readiest at hand, against a preponderance of force to which they cannot oppose any other check. Their mercantile marine being the first in the world, while their navy is comparatively feeble, they are unquestionably justified in saying that, if privateering were abolished, their merchant vessels would be captured in great numbers by the enemy's cruisers, without their being able to retaliate on the enemy's merchant vessels, owing to the fewness of their ships of war. What answer can be made to such a line of argument? It is hard to persuade a man, when the point of a sword is presented at his breast, that he ought to renounce the means of defence which he possesses, in order that his enemy may have less trouble in piercing him through and through.

It is idle to ask the Americans to consent to the abolition of privateering, so long as it is refused to change the conditions which make them regard privateering as a national necessity, in the event of hostilities. If England appeals against them to the interests of civilisation, they are entitled to reply to her: "It is these interests we pleaded five years ago, when we proposed to the European powers to exempt from all capture by ships of war the property of individuals; and when, at a later date, we proposed the abolition of blockades as regards trading ports, is it necessary to remind you with what vivacity and for what motives you rejected this proposition?"

The truth is, that in the solution of problems which rise out of the maritime code, each nation thinks much less of general civilisation than of its own interests, and nothing proves more clearly how important it would be to have a supreme tribunal to pass judgment upon quarrels between nations, just as there are tribunals in each separate nation to pass judgment upon quarrels between individuals.

What signifies, for instance, the guarantee presented against the arbitrary and abusive application of the right of search, by Prize Courts? Pretty justice that which rests on the violation of the principle which is the foundation of justice, that no one should be judge in his own cause!

Did England wait before declaring illegal by the voice of

her lawyers the seizure of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, until the American lawyers had expressed their opinion and enunciated their reasons? By no means. She hastened to say: "I am in the right," and she prepared to furnish the proof, should there be any occasion for it, at the mouth of the cannon.

Unhappily, such is the folly of mankind that, even in this age of steam and telegraph, if any one happened to express surprise at the absence of an Amphictyonic tribunal in the world, such a one would run great risk of being taken for an inhabitant of those Isles of Sugar-Candy which good Fenelon has so complacently described.

While waiting for better things, we may, perhaps, be permitted to inquire with Mr. Cobden, whose mind is not exactly of a chimerical order, if it would not be as well to exempt, in time of war, all neutral vessels from every kind of search, visit, and impediment?

It is the height of absurdity that at a time when the bonds of interest between the various nations of the earth have become so frequent and of such great importance, commerce and navigation should be paralysed because any two nations choose to disagree.

And where would be the inconvenience of a frank, logical, complete substitution of the system of liberty for the system of restriction?

Will it be objected that, if the words *contraband of war* were effaced from the international vocabulary; that, if the right of search, as concerns the search for *contraband of war*, were abolished, belligerents would no longer be in a condition to constrain neutrals to observe neutrality?

I have already replied to that objection by pointing out that neutrality can be violated in a thousand different ways; that it can be violated indirectly quite as effectively as in a direct manner, and by the transport of articles not generally defined as *contraband of war*, as well as by the transport of articles comprised under that name. In order, then, that the means should be appropriate to the end, belligerents ought to have the right of stopping on the way and of seizing, not only such or such an object determined beforehand in a fashion more or less arbitrary, but all objects the transport of which might appear to them a violation of neutrality. Are nations

prepared to enter upon this path? Are they disposed to sacrifice thus far the relations of peace to those of war? Are they of opinion that it is just, that it is reasonable, to cause the commerce and navigation of the entire world to suffer from the warlike caprices of two nations? Are they resigned to the danger of handing over the police of the ocean to whosoever feels strong enough to undertake it, and would undertake it cheerfully? Well and good. In any case there is one nation upon the globe who would consider it an admirable conclusion; and, if things be brought to that pass, an homage will be rendered to the right of the strongest quite worthy of it!

I am perfectly willing to grant that when two nations are at war, the one that is abundantly provided with arms is interested in preventing supplies from reaching the one that is in want of them. But what I cannot possibly understand is, why this interest should be so sacred that its triumph must be secured, cost what it may, without any regard to the commerce of the world, without any regard to liberty, without any regard to justice.

"But," I shall probably be asked, "do you mean that when a town is blockaded the liberty of commerce must be carried to the point of permitting neutrals to communicate with the besieged? This you must admit as a necessary consequence of your doctrine."

Not at all. For it is evident that, in this particular instance, the interdict cast upon the place blockaded directly results, not from any arbitrary convention, but from the very nature of things. Neutrals could not, without a violation of neutrality, penetrate into a besieged place to prosecute their commerce, for the simple reason that they could not do so without interfering with the siege operations. Once more, it is the nature of things which lays down the law in this case; and I may remark, in passing, that it was precisely to render amenable to this *unique* law the rights which are attached to a state of blockade, that the Treaty of Paris of the 16th of April, 1856, declared (Art. IV.) that, "Blockades, to be obligatory, must be *effective*."

As to the difficulty which would be experienced by belligerents in preventing the violation of the duties of neutrality, if the sea became as free in time of war as in time of peace, there is this to be said:

“Firstly, the difficulty is not avoided by the right of search, unless the list of the articles contraband of war be swelled out beyond all bounds.

“Secondly, as the facility given to belligerents to watch neutrals makes it necessary that means should be used which besides being vexatious, inquisitorial, and ruinous, include the germ of bloody disputes, the advantage resulting from that facility is nothing in comparison with the inconveniences it involves.

“Thirdly, the violation of neutrality is as much a *casus belli* as anything can be, and there is therefore no reason for making it the exceptional object of preventive measures.

“Fourthly, the right of search founded on the suspicions entertained towards neutrals by belligerents, is in itself an insult to their flags, and endows a few with the privilege of insolence towards all.

“Fifthly, *preventive* power implies the subordination of those by whom it is acknowledged, to those by whom it is exercised; whence this monstrous consequence, that any nation fond of domineering may indulge the lust of empire by merely passing from a state of peace to a state of war.”

I had much more to say; but I do not at all pretend to write an essay on the subject. In penning *currente calamo* the preceding reflections, I had, indeed, no other aim than to direct the attention of your readers to a question the sinister importance of which the affair of the *Trent* has once more brought into prominent notice. Hitherto this question has only been studied from the war point of view, and in the interest of force—is it not high time that it should be settled from a peace point of view, and in the interest of liberty?

LETTER XLVII.

A GLOOMY PROSPECT.

January 1st, 1862.

THE news received from America has been generally regarded as being of a pacific character. Still, if taken literally, it would seem to indicate that there may be expected from the American Government an answer implying a conciliatory disposition, without, however, being a pure and simple acceptance of the English ultimatum.

A reply of this kind is the more easy to foresee, because the Cabinet at Washington apparently finds itself between two shoals. If it decide upon war, it accepts a terrible responsibility. If it declare for peace purchased at the price demanded by the English, farewell to whatever popularity it may possess—unless the excitement in America gives way before the greatness and imminence of the peril.

I know from a very good source that, personally, President Lincoln is not one to nourish hostile feelings against England, and that Mr. Seward himself, whatever the English papers may say, is very far from summing up his policy in the phrase *delenda est Carthago*. If the correspondence of the latter with Mr. Adams betrays a very slightly veiled feeling of irritation, it also furnishes a clue to the motives, and no impartial judge will pronounce these motives to be devoid of foundation. It would, assuredly, be difficult to justify the policy of disdain, arrogance, and provocation in which the Americans delighted in their prosperity, whenever they had England face to face. But it requires no ordinary amount of boldness to pretend, as the *Times* does, that, since the disruption of the Union, there has been nothing unfriendly in the attitude of England towards the Northern States, and that consequently the ill-humour of the Washington Cabinet arises from absurd antipathies.

We, who are neither Englishmen nor Americans, can perfectly understand how it was that, in the interview with Lord Russell, described in Mr. Adams' despatches, the American

diplomatist opened his mind to the English Minister on the subject of the uneasiness experienced at Washington, in consequence of the prolonged stay of the Southern Commissioners in London, and of their well-known official relations with the Cabinet of Saint-James'.

Nor have we any greater trouble in explaining to ourselves how Queen Victoria's proclamation must have angered the Northern States, by seeming to elevate the Secessionist States to the rank of a belligerent Power. For, after all, to treat the Secessionist States as a belligerent Power, while the Northern States are combating them as rebels, is, in fact, equivalent to affirming that they are in the right; that the Federal Government, in attacking them, relies upon a false principle; and that the words "Restoration of the Union," which it has inscribed on its flag, are words void of sense. Now, it may answer the purpose of a certain class of Englishmen to assert that such is the case; but, surely, it is expecting too much from the Northern States to ask them to look at the matter from this point of view, because that would amount to the admission that the war they are waging against the South is not only unjust, but altogether destitute of reason. It is clear that the North must either put its flag into its case and lay down its arms, or else fight the Southern States as rebels, and as nothing but rebels. How, then, can anyone be astonished that it should feel irritated at whatever tends, on the part of a foreign Government, to relieve them from that character? The Federal Government cannot for a moment allow itself to be put on a footing of equality with the insurgents, without thereby condemning its own conduct. It appears to me that this has not hitherto been recognised, or at least sufficiently dwelt upon. Let us suppose that some fine day Ireland may find means of detaching herself from England, and that in order to render this separation permanent she should appeal to arms, would the English see nothing hostile in the fact of attributing the character of a belligerent Power to insurgent Ireland? The irritation created in the Northern States by the attitude of England—without speaking of the language of the English press, generally so full of sympathy for the South—may possibly be excessive, and rashly expressed; but that can be easily explained, and is quite natural; so

natural, indeed, that therein lies the chief difficulty of the situation.

Why dissemble the fact? The Constitution of the United States, whatever be its merits in other respects, has this defect, that it does not subject the power of majorities to that permanent control of which all kinds of authority stand in need,—the power of majorities more, perhaps, than any other. Many persons fancy that the sovereignty of the people is realised by the government of the greatest number, no matter how that government is organised or how it exercises its authority. For my part, I confess that I know few errors of a more dangerous character. Sovereignty cannot be a mere question of addition. A nation is something more than a cypher. What really constitutes a nation, what makes its greatness, what creates its power, is what it contains of ability, experience, reason, and intelligence. The giving movement to these living forces, for the common benefit, is what is meant by its sovereignty; and if universal suffrage deserves to have its excellence eulogised, it is because it furnishes, under certain given conditions, the best means that can be devised for placing the administration of public affairs in the hands of the most capable and most worthy. A democracy in which the sway of numbers tends to annul the action of men of intellect, instead of tending to confide to them the direction of the State, is not a democracy. It is but a many-headed, blind, and blundering despotism, a despotism irreversibly doomed to perish, sooner or later, by its own hands.

Of the conditions required for rendering the means appropriate to the end, there is certainly one in existence in America, and that is the liberty of discussion. Nowhere is there less fear of the light, and therefore nowhere is the diffusion of political life more remarkable. But, on the other hand, universal suffrage is not organised in America in such a manner as to give minorities the share of representation and influence which legitimately belongs to them. There the power of majorities is not only very great, but absolutely crushing. There the minorities are annihilated. And what is the result? The most eminent men are precisely those who have no place in the national representation, and who live apart from public business. According to a very

just remark of Mr. John Stuart Mill, 'political life in America is a very good school, but a school from which are excluded the most able professors.'

That is certainly a great evil under any circumstances, and peculiarly deplorable in national crises such as that which America is now passing through.

God grant that she may come out of it happily! But I cannot help feeling some uneasiness at the idea that the solution of the problem which keeps us all in suspense will depend upon the over-excited passions of the majority, in a country where the power of the majority is without any sufficient counterpoise, and requires to be held in guard against itself.

If, as may easily be foreseen, the reply of the Washington Government consists neither in the immediate release of the two captured Commissioners, nor in a haughty refusal of a nature to close the door against conciliatory overtures, will England hesitate to strike? I do not think so.

I lately read in the *Daily Telegraph*, a journal widely circulated, very well written, and, so far as concerns the home policy of England, very liberal, that in the event of the English ultimatum not being literally, purely, and simply accepted, all was over. If I do not mistake, that is the expression of the general opinion.

The *Daily Telegraph* is not, like the *Times*, a drawing-room or Foreign-office newspaper; but, for that very reason, it does not consider itself bound to use diplomatic language in its columns, and the simplicity, or rather the crudity with which it expresses English feelings, cannot fail to give a serious importance to its language in the present instance, for it is unfortunately in perfect harmony with all that I hear said around me.

It is but right, however, to confess that this bellicose ardour is not absolutely unanimous. The *Morning Star*, which propagates with great moral courage, and with much intelligence, the cosmopolitan tendencies of a policy of which Mr. Bright is the popular orator and Mr. Cobden the statesman—the *Morning Star* is not the only journal that pronounces against war. It is worthy of note that at Leeds, Bradford, and Manchester, men's minds are more alive than in London to the prospect of the evils which must ensue from an abrupt

interruption of the commercial relations of England with Northern America.

• I ought to add that the idea of an arbitration, as a means of avoiding bloodshed, continues to be put forward in certain organs of the English press. This idea has even found in Lord Ebury an advocate who sets forth its advantages in a manner as noble as it is striking. Lord Ebury invites his fellow-citizens to display in the present circumstances the moderation which is the majesty of force, and the generosity which is the proof of it. He insists upon the magnanimity of the proposition of arbitration coming from England herself at a time when, to the knowledge of the whole world, she is in the plenitude of her power and in a position to command victory. He recalls to mind what happened in England twenty years ago on the subject of duelling. A highly distinguished officer, and one generally beloved, having been killed in a duel by one of his relatives almost at the very moment when, returning from foreign service, he landed in his native country, public opinion was so much affected, that Lord Hardinge, with the assent of the Duke of Wellington, introduced into the theory of duelling alterations intended to subject the practice to the decisions of a Court of Honour. No one at first believed in the efficacy of such a remedy, so little probable did it seem that men of spirit would have recourse to it. Such, however, was not the case. Shortly afterwards an officer having addressed some insulting remarks to Captain Matson, the latter did not hesitate to avail himself of his well-known character and tried courage, and boldly appealed to a Court of Honour. The affair was arranged honourably for both parties, and from that day the practice of duelling was, so to speak, banished from England.

The parallel is happily hit, says *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, in quoting Lord Ebury's words in support of an article the conclusions of which are entirely pacific. "In order that the salutary principle put forward in the Treaty of Paris should be brought into application, it is necessary that some one nation should make a beginning. Now is there on the face of the globe any nation in a better position than England to act nationally, as Captain Matson did individually? We may well laugh at those who would shake their head at us, having the power of chastising in a prompt and

exemplary manner whoever should treat our moderation with disdain, or repel our just demands."

LETTER XLVIII.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY.

January 5th, 1862.

ON Monday last a meeting was held at Brighton, the composition and object of which are worthy of attention.

This meeting had been convoked by a committee of working men, and it was of working men that it was mostly composed.

Oh ! you were indeed right in pleading for a peaceful solution of the Anglo-American question, and in doing so how well you have appreciated the true interests of democracy ! For it is *that* which is on its trial. The working classes here are not deceived on that point ; and while the members of the aristocracy, the landed proprietors, the great manufacturers, and the politicians of the drawing-room or the club, breathe nothing but vengeance, war, and victory, it is to what an imbecile pride is accustomed to call the lower stratum of society, that we must descend to look for calmness, moderation, and a thoughtful love of peace.

How characteristic was that meeting at Brighton ! Its spirit was clearly revealed in the resolution which was then proposed and adopted. It was in the following terms :— “ Considering that the dispute between England and America has arisen from an erroneous interpretation of international law, rather than from an intentional insult to the British flag, this meeting is of opinion that the question ought to be submitted to the arbitration of a neutral power, and that, in the actual circumstances, a war with America would be unjustifiable, and would deserve to be disapproved by the English people.”

There were present two members of the House of Commons, the representatives of Brighton, Messrs. Coningham and White.

These two gentlemen, with whom I have the honour of being acquainted belong neither of them to Mr. Bright's school, and are far from being friends of peace at any price. But they do form part of the most advanced section of the liberal party in the House of Commons; they follow the triumph of progress with sincerity of heart; they are of those who, in advancing, look before them; they believe in the excellence of their country's institutions, without deceiving themselves as to their defects or the errors that are mixed up with them; they love America, because she has taught the world that the existence of a court and an aristocracy is not absolutely essential to the development of the material prosperity of a nation, any more than to the development of its moral greatness. And for these reasons the two Brighton representatives wish with their whole heart, as we ourselves wish, that war may be avoided.

I stated in my last letter that however pacific might be the latest intelligence received from America, it was as well to foresee the event of the answer of the Washington Government being conciliatory without being a pure, simple, direct, and unconditional acceptance of the English ultimatum. It was in view of this hypothesis that Mr. Coningham spoke at the Brighton meeting. If it happened that without going so far as to give up Messrs. Mason and Slidell, the American Government offered, for the sake of the principle, a suitable reparation, ought England to declare herself dissatisfied and have recourse to arms? No! exclaimed the orator; and this peremptory No, he followed up with a speech full of vehemence and emotion. Mr. White, also, spoke against the war, and did so amid loud applause.

The tendency to cut the knot with the sword is, therefore, as you perceive and as I lately affirmed, by no means universal; and I may add, that several symptoms indicate that the passion of war is cooling down as the dénouement approaches.

Speaking in a general manner, however, I still maintain that war is at the bottom of every thought and every wish. The day before yesterday, I was dining with a wealthy manufacturer from Lancashire, when the conversation naturally fell upon the great question of the day. "Well!" I inquired of my host, "what is the general opinion in your quarter of the globe?" "Indeed," replied he, with a smile, "if I

must speak plainly, many of us will be *disappointed* by the surrender of Messrs. Mason and Slidell." I repeat the word as I heard it with mine own ears. It is characteristic, and paints the exact situation.

There is no occasion to be much surprised at it. There is one thing which aristocratic England will never forgive the Americans, and that is the prodigious development of their power in such a short space of time, under the empire of democratic institutions. What! The United States paid no civil list; they had neither dukes, nor earls, nor viscounts, nor lords of any kind; they had dared to give the reins to universal suffrage; they bowed down to no other idol than the sovereignty of the people; they carried to excess, to fanaticism, to the exclusion of superior but too independent minds, their reverence for majorities; they went to extremes with their democracy; and yet, for all that, the United States, whom men still living had seen barely comprising three millions of souls, had reached to a population equal to that of England; and, a still more odious miracle, had come to possess a mercantile marine superior to that of the English! What a bad example to give to the world! What a dangerous propagandism! Who, after that, would be brought to believe that it is impossible to dispense with titled personages, or that democracy leads through chaos to annihilation, or that a step beyond the English institutions there is nothing but confusion, just as one step short of them there is nothing but a void!

Such are the sentiments with which the aristocratic class of this country, and even a certain portion of the middle class, are inspired by the spectacle of America making her place on the globe day by day larger, so large as that was, when the North and South violently separated. It would imply a very slight knowledge of human nature to question the secret satisfaction produced by an event so disastrous from so many points of view, in those whose interests it strengthened, whose prejudices it contented, and whose sagacity it seemed to attest. See, after all, what had become of this so much vaunted democracy! The rock against which it was to be shattered had at last come in sight; and what a rock!—a fearful civil war.

The North might, and ought to, have replied that, so far

from condemning their institutions, this very disaster turned to their honour, since it proved how irreconcilable they were with every principle that sets justice at nought and outrages humanity.

Unhappily such was not the language of those who had to speak in the name of the constitution of the United States, understood in its most elevated sense and in its irresistible logic. Instead of showing themselves proud of no longer having been able to make common cause with slavery; instead of giving this glorious inability as the most striking proof of their strength; they assigned a motive narrowly national, selfish, and vulgar, to a rupture that did honour to a republic founded on equality. They protested, as if it had been a crime, against having in view the abolition of slavery, against having brought it forward, and against having so far furnished a motive for the rebellion of the planters. The pretext was admirable for all who, in England, were jealous of the power of the Americans, who detested their institutions, and desired the triumph of the South as a means of weakening the former and of discrediting the latter. Heaven knows to what extent this pretext was of service to them, when they were obliged to conceal the true cause of their exultation and antipathy! The principle of slavery once set aside, what did they do in upholding the South? To hear them speak, they were supporting not a slave-holding nation, but a nation vindicating its independence and resuming its autonomy.

It is true, as Messrs. White and Coningham bitterly remarked, that these fervent advocates of nationalities which assert themselves, looked with indifference upon Poland panting and trampled under foot, allowed the Russians to step across the corpse of Hungary, and would have deemed it a monstrous thing had their government recognised the independence of Italy at the time when it was being incarnate, at Rome, in the form of a Republic!

However, such a contradiction was natural, and there is, unhappily, nothing in it to cause surprise. A *mot* of the poet Coleridge throws much light on the passions of the moment. Being asked what America would be a hundred years hence, he replied, "It will be Great Britain seen through a solar microscope!"

That Great Britain would cease to be an object of appre-

hension to the English, or, at least, would be less to fear, if America exhausted herself in the convulsions of a prolonged civil war; if the South gained the day; if the Republic whose marvellous growth was predicted by Coleridge in such a lively manner, remained definitively cut in two.

On the other hand, a trying ordeal democratic institutions have to encounter in these armed contests which cover with the pretext of necessity the confiscation of public liberties.

All that is well known to the English aristocracy; and could it possibly have been ignorant of it, there would probably have been less noise made about the affair of the *Trent*.

In any case this incident has furnished the English Government with a most lamentably plausible excuse for armaments on a considerable scale. If we are to believe Messrs. White and Coningham, who have both expressed themselves to the same effect on this point, these armaments—however pacific may be the solution of the question actually at issue—are intended to place England hereafter in a position to crush the North, should the latter choose to regard as a *casus belli* the official and formal recognition of the independence of the South—a recognition, the programme of which, according to the two members for Brighton, has been already settled by the Cabinet, and which is denounced beforehand by Mr. Coningham as an act likely to disgrace England.

The fact is, that the English would be tearing out with their own hands one of the finest pages of their history if, after all they have done, all the sacrifices they have made, for the abolition of slavery, they were to sanction its solemn and official consecration in the face of the whole world. Mr. White had the happy idea of recalling to mind, with reference to this subject, that Dr. Johnson, thorough Tory as he was, was in the practice, after drinking to "Church and King," of drinking "To the insurrection of the blacks in Jamaica." What would he say, if he came back to life, to the idea of morally patronising an insurrection having for its avowed object the perpetuation of the slavery of the blacks on the American continent?

Be this as it may, there is a point to which it is of consequence that public opinion should be directed, which is

this; the affair of the *Trent* is not a *cause*, it is only an *excuse*; and, consequently, an amicable arrangement of this particular case would not suffice to remove the difficulties already foreseen, or which may unexpectedly present themselves.

One thing also is certain. If the Northerners have to yield without compromise, in a manner that is humiliating, they will do so with rage at the heart. It will be the seeds of war sown in the field of peace. Let the hour and the opportunity for vengeance arrive for the Americans, we shall see if they fail to take advantage of them! It is thus that hostile feelings are perpetuated between nations; it is thus that so many efforts are wasted, in the act of filling that frightful vessel of the Danaïdes, through which, not water, but blood flows.

It would, certainly, be very desirable that the Washington Government should surrender the two captured Commissioners; but it would be still more desirable that this should be done as the result of a mediation asked, or offered, with elevated views to the future, and as the consequence of an arrangement calculated to save the honour of both nations, and, by giving to their mutual relations a solid basis, to bring out of a passing calamity the triumph of a great principle, that is to say, a lasting advantage.

LETTER XLIX.

A SINGULAR DISAPPOINTMENT.

January 13th, 1862.

IN justice to the English, it must be acknowledged that braggadocio is not one of their faults. If they are proud, their pride is at least sober, cold, and held in reserve; it does not explode in bravadoes; it does not evaporate in vauntings; and when it chances to assume an offensive character, it is less because of what they say, than of what they disdain to say, or affect to pass over in silence.

The news, therefore, of the release of Messrs. Mason and

Slidell has been received with pride tempered by gravity, and has been commented upon without too much emphasis. But what is worthy of remark, is the eagerness displayed by most of the journals to declare their satisfaction at seeing those perils warded off which, the very day before, they seemed so impatient to face. There is nothing more curious than the sudden reaction produced by the calm, dignified, and able reply of the Washington Government.

You will not have forgotten, perhaps, that in one of my preceding letters I said that Mr. Seward was far from being the man he is represented to be in the papers of this country; that he was not at all an American ogre, ready to eat up all the little babes born on this side of the Atlantic; and that we might expect from him, if not a pure and simple acceptance of the English *ultimatum*, at least a conciliatory and friendly reply. His despatches are now before you. They go beyond what could have been hoped. What do those think of them who strove to make Mr. Seward so black in the eyes of the English nation? See now how the torrent begins to run the other way. The most violent firebrands have decidedly assumed a peaceful air. The day before yesterday the *Saturday Review* did not hesitate to acknowledge that, so far as glory went, England would have had nothing to gain from such a struggle; but would always have been exposed to the reproach of showing extreme susceptibility towards America disunited and armed against herself, after having swallowed in silence so many affronts from America united and powerful. To-day the *Daily Telegraph*, whose articles on the *San Jacinto* affair seemed as if they were written with a sword's point, insists upon the propriety of meting out with liberal hand the praises due to the American Government for its moderation, and approves, without reservation, of the following passage in the speech delivered at Leith by Mr. Gladstone:—"Let us look to the bright side of what the Americans have done—and in what they have done there is a bright side, surely! Let us recall to mind the moment when the Prince of Wales appeared in the United States, and when thousands of men, nay, hundreds of thousands of men, were seen to flock from all sides on his passage through, and to welcome his presence with shouts as enthusiastic, as

evidently issuing from the heart, as if those vast countries were still under the dominion of the Queen."

How many other marks of sympathy given by the Americans to the English, might not Mr. Gladstone have recalled on this occasion! Did not the Americans show themselves animated with a fraternal solicitude for England at the time of her tragic struggle with India in revolt? Did not their ships carry their flags half-mast high at the news of the death of General Havelock? Might not a circumstance have been mentioned, when an American commander, seeing the English in danger, hastened to run to their assistance, although he could not do so without violating the principles of neutrality and his own instructions, and said to those who blamed him, "Blood is thicker than water?" Is there no journal here in which it would be possible to find, if we looked for it carefully, a narrative which describes American sailors, at a critical moment, working the English guns—a narrative, the author of which exclaims, with feeling of grateful emotion, "Brave Americans, you did more on that day to unite England and the United States, than all your lawyers, cavillers, and busy-bodies will ever do to disunite them!"

These things many were willing to forget yesterday who remember them to-day; and such as were never tired of inveighing against Jonathan's unsufferable arrogance, begin to own that, after all, it is only fair to make allowance for good as well as for evil.

Do not imagine, however, that there are none but converts in England. Far from it, alas! When I wrote to you eight days ago that if America removed every pretext for an exchange of cannon-balls, many folks here would be *disappointed*, I wrote the truth. On the day after the news arrived, a journal thus expressed itself:—"There is no great injustice in suspecting the opinion of this country of a shade of disappointment. The public had taken its part in the game of war; it had given up other engagements, paid at the door, and chosen its place, when all at once the manager comes forward and announces that the principal actor has sent an apology, and that they must not count upon him. It is possible to be disappointed, even with reference to a thing unfortunate in itself. We have heard mention made of a man who, imagining that he had a cancer, was greatly annoyed one fine

morning to learn that he was mistaken. When one has done so much to pluck up a stout heart, it is vexatious to have one's trouble for nothing."

And what is the paper that held such language? A paper of no importance, obscure, of no credit? No. This was the language of the *Times*, a journal which is supposed abroad to speak on great questions in the name of England.

As a fact, the sentiment expressed by the *Times* does exist in certain circles reputed of a very *political* character, and I have heard it enunciated in a still more precise manner. There are individuals who had cherished, with an egotistical complacency, the hope that the Washington Government would commit itself in the eyes of the world by a brutal reply, and would place itself entirely in the wrong. What a lucky stroke it would have been for the calumniators of democracy! With what a triumphant air would they have held up to the indignation of Europe, or to the public laughter, an act of obstinate arrogance, which, in the present situation of America, would have been an act of folly! What a magnificent text to dilate upon, touching the vice and danger of those popular institutions which make the popularity of a Government depend upon the meanest or the most calamitous concessions, and surrender questions of life and death to be settled by street clamours! But for any such railing there is no occasion. Everybody knows by this time what has occurred, and the fact will have its place in the brightest pages of the history of democracies. Not only has Mr. Seward's reply been of an exemplary moderation, but it is impressed with so much nobleness, and at the same time is so able, that it almost seems as if England herself had done the wrong for which she demanded satisfaction.

Mr. Seward's reply to the demands of England amounts, in fact, to this:—"We are too happy, in truth, that England has come to complain of seeing the liberty of the seas violated! Would to Heaven that she had always entertained such sentiments! We should not have had to sustain against her a war which left such lamentable traces! Reparation is demanded of us? Were we to speak correctly, we should say that we are called upon to proclaim once more what we have always proclaimed, what England, to our great delight, seems henceforth to proclaim with us, and what, we hope,

will remain as the fortunate and imperishable result of this incident. In violating the liberty of the seas, Captain Wilkes has by no means put in practice the lessons of America. Far from it. On the contrary, it is to the doctrine of the English with regard to maritime law, in its general application, that he has conformed. It is not, then, on account of England that we disavow him; but on our own account, in the name of a principle which we have always upheld, for the triumph of which we did not hesitate, in 1812, to expose ourselves to all the horrors of war, and to which our present disavowal will give a new force."

It may be conceived how bitterly this must have been resented by minds until then open only to impressions of hatred; and nothing else is required to account for the comments by which some have laboured to put a wrong construction upon the attitude of the Government of Washington.

But there is no denying that, whilst the latter, on this occasion, appears to advantage, the English Government stands forth in an equivocal light, to say no worse.

Could that, peradventure, be true, after all, which in the mouths of Messrs. White and Coningham seemed a somewhat gratuitous supposition, and rather a fear than an affirmation? Could there have been some grounds for the opinion expressed by those gentlemen at the Brighton meeting, that the fuss made by the English Government about the affair of the *Trent* was a mere excuse for arming, with a view to the ulterior recognition of the South? It must be owned that appearances to-day are against the Ministry. The discussion between the *Daily News* and the *Morning Post*, with which you have already acquainted your readers, throws a singular light on Lord Palmerston's policy.

If there be one fact henceforth established, it is that Mr. Seward's first despatch to Mr. Adams after the seizure of the Commissioners, was communicated to the English Government as far back as the 19th of December. Yes, at that date it is beyond all doubt that the English Government were aware that the Washington Cabinet did not mean to accept the responsibility of the act of Captain Wilkes, but cherished the most conciliatory disposition. Yesterday the *Morning Post*, which had boldly denied the fact of the communication of the despatch, was obliged to retrace its steps, and escape at a tangent. The

question, therefore, was solved. What was the duty of the Government? Was it not its most sacred, most imperative duty to make the public acquainted with the true state of things, to prevent passions from growing embittered, insults from being exchanged and powder from being accumulated in the mine? Was such a secret one of those which, it is useful, or even permissible, to keep? Even had nothing more been done than guarding the secret! But no. A report having got abroad that a friendly despatch had arrived, the *Morning Post* hastened to affirm that this despatch had nothing to do with the question which was agitating the public mind. Was it an error? Was it a falsehood? An error without doubt. But from whom did the *Morning Post* receive the fact which it announced with so much assurance, and which proved to be false? Lord Russell is known not to be a diplomatist of the school of Talleyrand, and, besides, he makes a point of standing aloof from the press. But such is not at all the case with Lord Palmerston. I have before me a series of very curious documents, respecting falsified despatches which his Lordship felt himself justified in presenting one day to Parliament. It is a strange history, amusing under a certain aspect, but for all that very sad. I will relate it to you, if an opportunity occurs; but what is quite certain, and what I can ~~even~~ now tell you, is that it does not say much for the scruples felt by men who, like Lord Palmerston, have had long to deal with diplomatic business, and who, brought up, as it were, in the seraglio, have made themselves acquainted with all its turnings. Besides, as everybody knows, the *Morning Post* is Lord Palmerston's paper. It is, therefore, to him that suspicion is naturally directed, when one seeks to discover the author of the mysterious *communiqué* in question.

The circumstance is a serious one. Such disastrous effects have occurred! For, setting aside the enormous inconvenience of leaving the door open to all sorts of menaces and to a deluge of words swollen by passion, the people will unfortunately have to pay very dearly, and in hard cash, for the ignorance in which certain directors of its destinies have thought proper to keep it. Thanks to this ignorance, the Government has been able, without molestation, to proceed with armaments well adapted to the calculations of its secret policy, nor can reinforcements be sent to Canada, at free

cost, without speaking of the rest. It may seem very amusing to those gentlemen to set public opinion on fire in both hemispheres on the subject of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, the former of whom was the promoter of the fearful law on fugitive slaves, and both of whom are represented by the *Times* as "the poorest prey that it was possible to tear from the throat of the American lion;" but, with no other object in view, to throw money out of the window at a time when the public are so anxious to keep it in their own pockets, is, really, a little too much of a good thing.

Constitutional Government rests upon several fictions—upon this, for instance,—"The King reigns, but does not govern." We shall probably soon be called upon to decide whether ministerial responsibility is, or is not, also one of these fictions.

LETTER L.

DISPOSITION TO RECOGNISE THE SOUTH.

January 22nd, 1862.

If, repudiating the most glorious act in her past history, condemning the solemn homage rendered by herself to the dignity of man, and unmindful of the sacrifices which that homage cost her, England were now publicly to offer to the maintenance of slavery the support of her official patronage, it would be the worst scandal of modern times.

I say with profound regret, because I love England as the classic land of liberty, but without hesitation, because I think it to be a fact, that everything here is preparing for a signal recognition of the Southern States.

During the first few days which followed the receipt of the unexpected intelligence that the Washington Government had surrendered the Commissioners, without equivocation, without sheltering itself behind any dilatory measure, without proposing a compromise, without seeking refuge in an offer of mediation; in a word, simply, completely, according to the terms dictated by England, and within the time fixed by that

Power, the impression was such as I have described in my preceding letters.

Men of wise and lofty views were delighted to see the fearful storm pass away which threatened to burst upon the world. Those to whom the honour of England is really dear, rejoiced to see her escape the humiliation of hearing it said: "You seize greedily an opportunity of crushing, when it has already a war upon its arms and is enfeebled, a nation at whose hands you have endured everything, possibly too much, when it was strong." Men of a calm temperament opened their hearts to a sentiment of satisfaction, which they displayed without constraint, and which was reflected in a considerable number of journals. Lastly, the war party, though tolerably influential and numerous, allowed its disappointment to appear with an awkwardness which testified to its embarrassment.

But when the first effect of the news had passed away, public opinion, if my own observations do not mislead me, was gradually brought back into its ancient channel. Do you remember what I wrote to you before the reply of the Washington Cabinet was known? I expressed a fear that the question would not be finally set at rest by that answer, however favourable it might prove to be. I said: For England, the affair of the *Trent* is not a cause, but a pretext!"

That point of view has been only too well justified by the spectacle which is now passing under my eyes. The peace party remains courageously faithful to its doctrines; but it becomes daily more evident that the war party rallies round its sinister banner the floating portion of the public. There is no effort this party will not strain itself to make, no sophistry it will not employ, to show that the reparation granted by the Federal Government is illusive, and that the insult offered to the British flag still remains to be avenged. You should hear the leaders of the war party and their organs! It is almost incredible. "What matters it that Mr. Seward consented to give up the Commissioners, if he did so, only when constrained and forced? If he thought the act of Captain Wilkes to be illegal, why did he wait to make the avowal until England flashed a sword's blade before his eyes? And if Messrs. Mason and Slidell had been improperly

seized, by what right were they detained in captivity? Has the American Admiralty apologised, which dared to approve of the conduct of Captain Wilkes? Has Congress apologised, which voted thanks to him? Has President Lincoln, who laid before Congress, without a word of censure, the official despatches relative to the seizure of the Commissioners, solemnly repeated before the world his *meā culpa*? Has Captain Wilkes been dismissed? Have the New York papers, which were so insolent as to pretend that no concession must be made, confessed their crime? What value is to be attached to a concession so evidently extorted by fear? And this fear experienced by America, how is it to be supposed that she will ever forgive those who have inflicted upon her such a dishonour? How certain any doubt as to the ardent desire she cherishes in her heart to be avenged at the first opportunity? Nothing, then, has been done."

Such is their mode of reasoning. To satisfy them, America must have carried the fanaticism of contrition to the point of doing far more than England demanded. To the English *ultimatum* she must have added a *postscriptum*, with her own hand, extending its requirements and aggravating its terms. Deeming herself insufficiently punished, she must have taken the trouble to complete her own chastisement!

All this is so extraordinary, that your readers may think I exaggerate. It is, in fact, hard to believe in such violence after such an ample reparation. But let us listen to the organs of the war party. From among the papers belonging to that category which cover my table, I take one at hazard, and I read in it:—

"We have been too good-natured towards these Yankees. Let it be thoroughly understood that we have the arm raised, and that we will not recede a foot's length. Palmerston took the eagle by the beak, and the restitution of the Commissioners was from no other cause. It is by the American *nation* that we have been insulted and outraged: all the protocols in the world will not efface that fact. And we do not mean to point to the *New York Herald*, the irresponsible press, the populace, the scum of demagogues and the scum of factions. It would be as much to the purpose to identify with the sentiments of John Bull the false and cringing unpatriotism of the *Daily News*, or the anti-national disaffection

of that noisy cabal which called with might and main for an arbitration, not even left to our choice: it is the American *nation* we hold responsible for the acts of its high functionaries and representatives."

Then follows a formal accusation of the Governor of Massachusetts, of the Mayor of Boston, of the Admiralty, of the Senate, and of Congress, for having abstained from making an *amende honorable* which was not demanded of them; the whole crowned by a furious sally against the *hypocrites* who, under the pretext of desiring the emancipation of the blacks, accord their sympathies to the North.

In such terms does the *Weekly Dispatch* express itself, and such is the language of I know not how many other papers more or less important, but widely circulated.

Now, need I remark that this great explosion of wrath is explained on the part of those who give themselves up to it, by a thoroughly calm and perfectly well argued appreciation of the material advantages which it aims at bringing about? England boasts of being a practical nation, and so far she is not wrong. Sentimental wars, wars *for an idea*, or even exclusively for a point of honour, do not tempt her. But show to her, as the necessary or probable consequence of an exchange of hard blows, the extension of her commerce or the increase of her riches, and she is quite ready to strike.

Well, it is precisely with a view to this disposition of the English people that the partisans of war now state the question, and, to do them justice, they make no mystery of the true motives of their tenderness for the South and of their fury against the North. They proclaim aloud to whosoever is willing to listen to them, that the Federalists, after all, are only farmers who have to export nothing but salt pork, bread, and cheese; that their products offer a very limited perspective to labour and the love of gain; that the South, on the contrary, is a country essentially productive of riches; that the independence of the victorious South would secure to England a direct commerce, and one free from the fetters of a tariff; that the produce of the South is eminently adapted by its nature for exportation and exchange; that rice, coffee, sugar, rum, tobacco, and cotton, are produced and exported by the South to the value of £54,000,000, a consideration not to be overlooked; and that, by the navigation laws of the

Union, these exports are in a great measure drawn to the Northern ports, which is an obstacle to the employment of the English marine, &c. &c.

Were I called upon to treat of this question, I might perhaps have much to reply; but it is no business of mine, and I merely mention all this to enable you to judge of the character of the national susceptibilities which allowed themselves free scope *under the pretext* of the *Trent* affair. Now that that affair is happily terminated, in the manner prescribed by the English Government itself, it is pretended that nothing has been done, that the Washington Government did not yield with a good grace, and that consequently there are grounds for re-opening the quarrel. Very good. But, then, why declare so loudly what England would gain, materially, from the assistance expected by the Slave States? How exceedingly candid!

Useless, after that, to remark that the partisans of war do not fail to thunder against the blockade, and to press the Government to take decisive measures in that respect. It is affirmed that the blockade ought to be raised as ineffective, which does not, however, save from being devoted to the infernal deities the authors of the plan recently devised to render it effective—the filling up with stones the port of Charleston.

If, as most of the English journals persistently assert, this filling up was of a nature to oppose to navigation a permanent and eternal obstacle, it would doubtless be an act of treason against all mankind. Even war is not justified in waging war to such an extent against the laws of nature; and it would be monstrous to admit that any nation is entitled, in order to subject another, to attack the human race; it would be monstrous to recognise in it the right of arming the present against the future. But if, as your New York correspondent has luckily informed us, the destruction of the port of Charleston is not complete; if it is such that its effects can be remedied, that entirely changes the aspect of the question. For in what respect is the filling up of a port which can be restored to commerce, a more odious act than the bombardment of a town which can be rebuilt? When speaking of their projected war against America, did the English scruple, only the other day, to reckon among their chances of success the power of burning all the towns on the enemy's sea-coast?

We might go further and ask if the life of any one of those beings who, as we are taught from every pulpit, were created in the image of God, is not as sacred, as inviolable, as a port? Yet, great captains, without being called to account for it, have pronounced those terrible words: "In a battle men are nothing, minutes are everything." And no one, I imagine, will dispute the character of permanence attached to the intervention of cannon in our quarrels, no one will pretend that the dead are wont to rise again!

In fact, war, which will remain a direful necessity until the world is of age, cannot possibly fail to produce results partaking of its abominable nature. Instead of protesting so violently against the consequences, it would be as well to think a little of narrowing the circle of causes; and it is somewhat strange that in England those who are the most indignant at the conduct of Commodore Davis, should precisely be those who are urging on the English to a conflict the probable consequences of which make one shudder.

But, I repeat, they wanted pretexts, and this served them admirably. They have, therefore, made the most of it. You will see, if the English Government recognises the South, it will be solely to avenge the human race, and to punish the North, in the name of all the nations of the earth!

Besides, this circumstance is not the only one which is serviceable to the South. Trade just now is rather dull. The Bank of England, as you are aware, has reduced the rate of discount from three to two and a half per cent., whence it results that at all the deposit banks depositors receive no more than one and a half per cent. interest, the rule being that those establishments pay one per cent. less than the rates adopted by the Bank of England. This enormous fall in the price of money proves its abundance, but it also proves a scarcity of investments and the stagnation of business everywhere. Commerce and industry undoubtedly languish. The situation of Lancashire is especially deplorable. In some factories the operatives work no more than four days in the week; in others, only three; in others, again, only two; and in some, not at all. Why so? There are several causes, among which figures beyond denial the present state of America. But this one, though the most apparent of all, is neither the most real, nor the most profound. The evil lies

at the bottom of the economic constitution of modern societies, which, resting on no normal relation between the development of production and the corresponding resources of consumption, brings about, at periodical intervals, a glutting of the market. In the midst of the universal struggle of interests, scrambling for the profits of trade, it is impossible that production should be exactly regulated according to the demands of consumption; and when industrial activity is stimulated by competition beyond measure, it is but natural that there should be an exaggeration of productive forces, and that all things should be left to chance.

The overflowing of markets, which the English call "gluts," is the inevitable consequence of the fact of producing in the dark and at hazard; and so soon as this consequence manifests itself, production is forced to stop, and to a period of irregular activity succeeds one of languor. Hardly a year ago there was such an impulse given to trade in England that it resembled a fever. The Bank at that time charged six per cent., whereas now it charges only two and a half. Nothing more natural; the latter of these figures is explained by the former.

Unhappily, causes of this kind are not those which generally strike the attention of the mass of the public. It is with the outward causes of their sufferings that people are wont to quarrel. Hence the tendency to attribute exclusively the situation of the industrial world to the war which the North has thought right to declare against the South. Hence also the desire to put an end to the present state of things on the other side of the Atlantic by a peremptory recognition of the sovereignty of the slave-owners.

It is true, this would be engraving war upon war, the North being resolved, in such a case, to carry everything to extremes. But this consideration, far from paralysing the ardour of the party which holds with the South, adds fuel to the fire. They say to themselves: "A war with the North is precisely what we wish, convinced as we are that it will be brief and decisive. We have now the measure of this Power which for a long time we believed to be colossal. Their intestine dissensions deliver them up to us. Let us take care not to let the opportunity escape. The fact of the New York Banks being reduced to suspend payment in specie sufficiently

proves that North America is in want of the sinews of war. The impossibility she experienced of refusing us a reparation demanded with the hand on the sword, shows that she is conscious of her own weakness. Farewell to the splendour reflected by this so-much vaunted democracy! It is now no more than the light of a lamp burning in the skull of a skeleton. Let us lose no time in disposing of her."

It remains to be seen if it will be quite as easy as those gentlemen imagine to deal with a nation which has on foot an army of 600,000 men, which knows what its ships can do when equipped as cruisers, and which, if driven to desperate measures, may get rid of a civil by a servile war. The very hair stands on one's head to think what victory gained under such conditions might chance to cost England.

Such arguments as these, you may be certain, will find in England eloquent lips to give them weight. The friends of justice and humanity in this great country are, after all, neither so few nor so spiritless that they can easily be left out of the reckoning.

And as here public affairs are really public, everyone having the right of speaking aloud, and being accustomed to carry the head high, if a Punic policy happened to prevail, through a mischance which I hardly dare to foresee, it would at least not be without having called forth a powerful and avenging protest which, throughout the entire world, would become that of every sound mind and of every generous heart.

LETTER LI.

HOW THE POOR DIE.

January 27th, 1862.

A FRIGHTFUL catastrophe has, this week, diverted public attention from politics.

There is worked at Hartley one of those coal mines which, for England, are mines of gold. It is the deepest one, I believe, in this country. Of the three layers of coal through which one descends to the bottom, the lowest is 600 feet from the surface of the soil. Some few days ago the shaft of the mine was divided down its entire length by a strong wooden partition, thus forming two compartments; the one for going down, the other for coming up, and both serving for ventilation. The shaft having been sunk through a mass of by no means tenacious earth, it had been found necessary to face the walls with solid timber-work; and the mine being exposed to floods, it had been also found necessary to combat the water by a gigantic engine, contiguous to the mouth of the mine, the shaft of which weighed not less than forty tons.

On the 16th January, at 10 A.M., they were relieving the gang at work, and the iron basket in which eight colliers were coming up had reached half-way to the surface when, suddenly, the shaft of the enormous machine parting in two, the half that projected fell into the abyss with the noise of thunder, crushing in its fall the wooden partition, tearing away the facings of the shaft, and dragging down with it an avalanche of rubbish. The basket was struck on its way up and was partly broken. Three of those, however, who were in it still kept their seats; but the five others were precipitated into the abyss, where two were killed on the spot, and three died after a short agony. But this was only the first act of the terrible drama. The rubbish accumulated at the bottom intercepting all communication between the world above and the world below, two hundred and fourteen colliers, who were at work in the lowest vein, found themselves buried alive!

Were there any means of saving them? The fracture of

the shaft of the engine was a circumstance doubly terrible, as there was no longer any possibility of preventing the water from penetrating into the mine. One hope, however, remained. As an additional means of ventilation, an air-shaft had been pierced, through which, with the help of a ladder, it was possible to mount from the third to the second layer. If the rubbish could be removed which closed the passage, perhaps all might not be lost. The attempt was undertaken with great zeal. A number of intrepid and experienced miners set to work. But it was not an easy task, the rubbish that blocked up the shaft rising as high as the first layer; and every minute of delay seemed an age. During the 17th and 18th, in order to break through to the buried workmen, everything was tried that intelligence could suggest, stimulated by devotedness and served with courage. Up to midnight on the 17th a noise had been heard underground, indicating that the unhappy beings imprisoned in the bowels of the earth were resolutely at work upon their own deliverance; but from that moment nothing whatever was heard.

During all this time a crowd in consternation gathered round the mouth of the fatal pit, on the land of the living. Medical men hastened to the spot, ready to offer their services. The haggard looks, the pale cheeks of many of the women showed only too plainly that all they held dear in this world was at the bottom of the abyss. One of them, named Oliver, had her husband and six boys down there! There are scenes which cannot be described. What hours of anguish! What inexpressible tortures! With what feverish impatience did they question whoever had descended into those depths as to what was doing there, what there was to fear, what there was still to hope!

A horrible thing to think of is, that the labour of clearing away the rubbish, prosecuted without cessation since the 16th, was interrupted on the morning of the 20th, by the necessity of providing for the safety of the working-party, because the interior faces of the pit having been laid bare by the fall of the timber-work that covered them, the water filtering through the badly joined stones, a falling in of the earth had become not only possible, but probable. As if to fill up the measure of misfortune, when, after this necessary but dreadful delay, operations had been resumed, and an opening at last effected

through the rubbish, it was discovered that a poisonous gas was escaping from the bottom of the pit, whence it was concluded that those whom they were seeking to save had already perished. There was no slight danger in braving this new enemy. Several individuals, nevertheless, did so with heroic courage, some of whom were brought up to the surface almost resembling dead bodies. Let us abridge these heart-rending details. On the 22nd all was known. A man of an indomitable spirit had descended the shaft, determined to penetrate by the opening made in the gallery into the region below, and when he came up again, he stated, in the midst of loud sobs, that those whom they sought were dead—he had seen them. Some of these unhappy beings appeared to have quitted life with a desperate energy, of which they still bore the traces; but most of them seemed to be sunk in a peaceful sleep, and to have tenderly arranged themselves for death, sons reposing in the arms of their fathers, and brothers by each other's sides.

The number of women, children, and old folks has been reckoned up, whom this disaster deprives of their natural supports and plunges into mourning. It amounts to 407. An entire village is depopulated.

Was the catastrophe—and there are many of this kind—impossible to foresee? No. Several times already the inspectors of mines have recommended that two shafts should be sunk; but mine-owners, as I am informed, find that too costly. How many poor must yet perish before a little less regard is paid to expense? And why, if individual selfishness continues obstinate, should the Legislature not intervene? Observe, this latter question is not mine. I find it proposed in a letter addressed to the *Times* by an Englishman. And I date this letter from the country in which the doctrine of "let alone" has been so noisily proclaimed!

Some time ago a woman, named Anne Hamilton, went up to a constable, and said, "I had a child eleven months old. Having no bread to give it, and not having the courage to let it slowly die of hunger, I killed it." Nothing forced this woman to make such a declaration; but she had no reason to desire to live, and she wished to die.

She was duly committed, and a few days afterwards, was brought up for trial. From her examination it was ascer-

tained that she and her husband occupied a frightful den in some hideous alley in London; that they had had two children, the one whom the mother had just killed, and a little girl, afflicted with paralysis; that the husband was a man of good character, but that the absolute and prolonged want of employment had plunged him into horrible misery; and that the wife had been seen running through the streets at night, a prey to a sort of black delirium, and as if impatient to fly from herself.

The part of the public accuser was to obtain a capital sentence; but his heart protested so strongly against the rigorous fulfilment of his legal duty, that he took special care to suggest the only means of defence it was impossible to attempt. Who knows? Might not the murder in question have been an act of madness? Such, in fact, was the idea developed by her own counsel. When it came to the judge's turn to speak, he also did what his duty enjoined him to do. He said that even extreme want did not justify infanticide; since the law ordained that extreme want should be relieved, and gave the means. But *the man*, immediately belying *the magistrate*, hastened to add, in addressing the jury, "If, however, you are of opinion that the distress of the accused has shaken her reason, has deprived her of the power of distinguishing between right and wrong, it is lawful for you to acquit her from that point of view." It can hardly be said that there was any deliberation. Like the public accuser, like the counsel for the defence, like the judge, the jurors were men.

Now, their verdict has been universally approved. What a revelation! What an avowal! Of those who wished that the poor creature should be spared, of those who acquitted her, is there one who really believed that she was mad? No, nobody believed it. It required a falsehood to save her, and this falsehood was preferred to the necessity of condemning a mother, the victim of the conditions of an imperfect system of society. In vain the judge stammered out a vague allusion to the foresight of the law; in vain he sought therein the proof that infanticide is not excused by the want of means of subsistence; he himself trembled lest the jury should take him at his word, and his summing-up was for mercy.

The law invoked on this occasion by the honourable magis-

trate was that which governs the workhouse. It tears wives from their husbands, and children from their mothers; nor is it without reason that the *Weekly Dispatch* exclaims, in commenting upon the sad episode I have just related, "The poor-law, a pure mockery!" Perhaps some day I shall have to give you an account of the workhouse; in the meantime, allow me to observe, that the principle on which the poor-law is based is this:—"It must be managed so that the condition of the poor, at the charge of the parish, shall be rendered more miserable than that of the most miserable of free-labourers." Yes, that is the principle, such as you may find it very learnedly developed in the Reports of the Poor Law Commissioners. Let it not be supposed, however, for all that, that these Commissioners are merciless, flint-hearted men. Far from it. All that flows from their pen testifies to their humanity. But what would happen if the existence of a man fed by the parish became an object of envy for the man maintained by his own labour? What a bonus offered to indolence, improvidence, and all the vices! Strange result that, which should cause the workshop to be abandoned for the workhouse! A fine foresight that which, drying up, on one hand, the sources of the public wealth, should tend, on the other, to burden more and more, and beyond all measure, the budget of public benevolence! It is necessary, therefore, whether one likes it or not; it is necessary, on pain of ruin and madness, to endeavour to make the life of an inhabitant of the workhouse as hard as possible, in order that those alone should be tempted to knock at the door who are absolutely unable to do otherwise. It is required by the inevitable logic of human errors that the succour administered in the workhouse should belong to the category of

ces avares secours

Qui prolongent vos maux en prolongeant vos jours.

At Rome, when a Vestal succumbed to love, she was buried alive, and a jug of water and a loaf were placed by her side; but they had the humanity not to renew the bread of the buried Vestal, nor the jug of water! Woe to him who succumbs here to poverty! Interment with prolonged existence is his lot. And let him not complain of the rigour with which public charity doles out to him the means of existence—it is *necessary*.

What! Make of charity a punishment! Transform mercy into chastisement! Add to the list of crimes the crime of poverty! If I refuse to work, let me die—I agree. But what am I guilty of, if, after seeking everywhere for work, I cannot find any? And why, then, do you make me pay so dear for your pity? The answer is not consolatory, though peremptory: it must be so!

But if such a result be inevitable, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that the Poor Law, while it attests the existence of a great evil, is so far from furnishing a remedy for it, that it hardly offers a palliative.

Here we have a remarkable fact. The country which has put in force a law, the avowed object of which is to nourish, at the expense of society, the supernumerary workmen, workmen without employment, is precisely the country where the greatest liberty is allowed to the action of the individual abandoned to himself, and where the greatest hopes are founded on the results of this free action! The country which has been brought to practice, under a form not only unproductive but ruinous, the doctrine of the intervention of the State, is that in which the doctrine of "Let alone" has been preached most loudly and persistently!. The contradiction is very striking, and abundantly proves that is there here a social abyss to be fathomed.

LETTER LII.

A MONSTROUS TRIAL.

February 3rd, 1862.

You remember the fable of *L'Huître et les Plaideurs*! Well, this fable has been acted here on a colossal scale, with an accompaniment of circumstances such as never, perhaps, occurred in the most famous of famous trials.

It must be owned that when society takes the trouble to make dramas or comedies, it does so in a manner which sets at defiance the genius of the most prolific dramatists. To succeed in this, it has only to raise a corner of the veil which covers,

in its everyday life, all that its depths conceal of crime and vice, of folly and baseness.

Last Thursday, then, witnessed the conclusion of a trial which has lasted since the middle of December,—a trial the details of which, by turns laughable and scandalous, have gratified the public curiosity for thirty-four days. Was there a more prodigious banquet served up to it within the memory of man?

In this truly monstrous trial a hundred and forty witnesses have been summoned from all parts of England, from the furthest ends of Ireland, Scotland, and Russia. Of the thirty-four days devoted to the examination of the question at issue, the pleadings alone occupied eight or nine, which will not surprise you when you learn that every word uttered on this occasion was worth as much gold as you could hold in your hand.

Allow me to invite your attention to the following calculation:—

Suppose that, to indemnify the 140 witnesses who were heard, they had been paid each £40	£5,600
That, four solicitors—two being all that was wanted —had received £2,000 each	8,000
That, to encourage the verbose eloquence of four counsel—of whom two were certainly not wanted —the same rate had been adopted of £2,000 each	8,000
And, lastly, that the costs of the Court were valued at	8,000
The total of this fabulous calculation would amount to only	£29,600

But taking the lowest of the estimates presented to the public in the newspapers, this trial has cost £60,000 sterling, or 1,500,000 francs.

It is true that if we accept the declaration of one of the counsel, this sum must be reduced to £20,000, or half a million of francs. But the counsel are naturally interested in diminishing the scandalous size of the oyster they have swallowed. Certain it is that a very humble, very obscure witness, who stammered out two or three insignificant sentences, received £100. A clever arithmetician has calculated that the amount expended during the thirty-four days, was at the rate of three guineas a minute.

All this for the sake of ascertaining whether, or not, a cer-

tain Mr. William Frederick Windham has sense enough to look after his own property.

The law, as you see, knows pretty well how to make a good hand of it.

But as there is more than one lesson to be derived from this illustration of the oyster eaten by the lawyers and the shells left to the litigants, I shall tell you the story as briefly as I can.

Mr. William Frederick Windham, whose name has taken the post of honour in the annals of cheap justice, is of the class of those who, as the English say, are born with a silver spoon in their mouth, and are able at an early age to lead a fast life. Ah! if his brains had only weighed as much as his purse! Care has been taken to let the public know that our hero, when he was a child, was very fond of washing up the dinner things, of putting on the livery of his father's servants, and of waiting on his parents at table; and that his father, with a view to encourage these innocent tastes, had made for the little fellow a costume *ad hoc*, such as distinguished his lackeys from the rest of mankind.

It is also stated that he displayed a precocious talent for all the functions which refer to the service of the railways. Frankly, there is no great harm in all that, though it is affirmed that the ambitious desire to act as a stoker, to open and shut the doors, to busy himself about passengers' luggage, &c. &c., became, when he reached manhood, a real passion in the nephew of General Windham and Lord Alfred Hervey.

If, for supplying you with a complete biography of Mr. Frederick Windham, I were to receive only the one-hundredth part of what Mr. Montague Chambers, the counsel of this poor wretch's enemies, has gained for omitting nothing, I would tell you, day by day, what he did and what he did not do, first of all at Blackheath, and afterwards at Eton, where the society of books profited him little, and that of his teachers still less.

Let it suffice you to learn that at Eton one of his favourite amusements was to howl in a manner to frighten people, and that his schoolfellows nicknamed him "mad Windham." A little later we find him under the friendly tutelage of Colonel Bathurst who, having undertaken to give him the education of foreign travel, took him to Brussels, Spa, Wiesbaden, Frankfort, Baden-Baden, &c., and who describes him as indulging, during their peregrinations, in a thousand eccentricities

more than English; laughing without measure and without motive, weeping much after the same fashion, attaching an immense importance to being on friendly terms with the railway guards, paying court to every woman he met and that in clothes full of holes, shouting aloud for hours together in the Black Forest, &c., &c. Foreign travel having failed, as it appears, to render him wiser, for "rarely in running through the world does one become a better man," he distinguished himself on his return by the most extravagant follies that can mark the adolescence of a spoilt child of weak understanding. He was fond of playing the part of a policeman in the streets. He went about the railway stations clothed in the uniform of the employés, took care of the luggage, and when the train was about to start, called out at the top of his voice, "Now then, ladies and gentlemen, take your places!" One day he snatched the whistle out of the guard's hand, gave the signal, and caused the train to start before the right moment, so that the passengers escaped by a miracle from the danger of a murderous collision.

Then came to him, as to every mortal, the hour of love. His evil star having guided him to the Ascot Races, he was introduced to a young lady belonging to the category of those who in France pass by the name of *lorettes*, and whom the English, in their respect for horses, call "horse-breakers." Miss Agnes Willoughby, otherwise named Agnes Rogers, was the pearl of women of her class, as her counsel, Mr. Coleridge, ingeniously remarked, thinking, no doubt, that it is better to be the first in a village than the second in Rome. The village, on the present occasion, was Newmarket, or something like it.

In company with this charming person, the first in her village, was a Mr. Roberts, who was far advanced in her good graces, and who figured at the trial as possessing a fine mansion in Piccadilly, a very elegant phaeton, and several houses, in different parts of the town, of an equivocal character. However the latter circumstance may be, Mr. Frederick Windham heard of it after he had made the acquaintance of Mr. Roberts—which did not prevent Mr. Windham from knitting friendship with Mr. Roberts. As for Miss Willoughby, he became all at once enamoured of her to the point of desiring her for a wife. Alas! he was then in a state of

health of which the lady was informed, and which ought to have caused an immediate marriage to be regarded as a peril; the peril was risked. There was another impediment: the lady enjoyed, no matter by what title, an income of £2,000 sterling, which she had no idea of renouncing unless an equivalent compensation was secured to her before the marriage ceremony. However, in the presence of the solicitor whose intervention was invoked, she kindly consented, after some discussion, to accept a paltry settlement of £800 a-year, on condition that the amount should be raised to £1,500 in 1869, at which date the young man was to enter into full possession of all his fortune, a portion of which happened to be alienated until then.

To this proof of disinterestedness the young bride added the still more touching proof of her affection for her sisters: she demanded and obtained the power of disposing by will of the money settled upon her. The difficulties disappeared, one after another; but there still remained a third one. The lady had a lover, and even more than one, if the story is to be believed. Any other than Mr. Frederick Windham would have looked twice into it; but he seemed to care about it so little, that he had no objection to make to the woman who was about to become his wife passing the night before her marriage in the house of the man whom he knew to have been the lover in question.

The marriage was celebrated; and some days afterwards, for reasons which the young wife could have foreseen, which she preferred not to foresee, and which it is more easy to guess than to explain, she claimed a compensation, which was granted her by her good-natured husband. This compensation consisted in jewels of the value of £14,000. Talk of reconciliations of this kind! It is almost as dear as the administration of justice in England. The worst of it is that the reconciliation was of little use. One fine day the lady disappeared from Felbrigg, the residence of her youthful husband, running, as Mr. Montague Chambers observed, after a well-known opera singer.

Is this all? No: but the details which, for the last six weeks, have filled the columns of all the English papers, are of such a revolting character, and some of them so obscene, that I must omit them, and I fear I have already said too much.

There are paths so filthy, that it is impossible to walk in them without plunging the foot into mud. The lesson to be derived from this affair, at least by those who reflect, must be my excuse in your eyes and in those of your readers. I proceed.

If Mr. Frederick Windham had owned neither money nor land, which of his friends, relations, or acquaintances, I will ask, would ever have thought of declaring him mad because he sometimes laughed without motive, or wept without measure, or amused himself by acting as a guard at railway stations? And had he been a hundred times more vicious than he has been represented to be, who would have undertaken to drag him before the public, if he had not had the means of paying dearly for his vices? Folly, within the limits traced above, is a disease terribly common, I am afraid. Who has not some mania of his own? Who has not a little grain of folly in somebody else's eyes, or about something? The miser who calls the prodigal a madman, is himself a madman in the eyes of the prodigal. Ask Mr. Bright what he thinks of the majority of heroes! Ask a sceptical philosopher what he thinks of martyrs! Fanaticism, a divine enthusiasm in the opinion of fanatics, is, in the opinion of calmer minds, not merely a folly, but a folly of the most dangerous kind. If it were necessary to shut up all the fools who proceed to suicide from gambling, and those who stake the happiness of their entire life upon a moment's gratification, what proportions would have to be given to Charenton and to Bedlam!

Why, then, has Mr. Frederick Windham been thus prominently put forward? The reason is simple enough. Mr. Windham had a large fortune and heirs. With what tender solicitude, therefore, have his affectionate relatives secured for him the honours of the pillory! With what indefatigable ardour have they collected, for months past, all the evidence whence it could be shown, from their point of view, to the satisfaction of the public, that the object of their watchful regard was a liar, a glutton, a slave of discreditable habits, a libertine, and a fool! Has the force of family feeling ever appeared under a more touching aspect?

In France, as you are aware, when a man, who has attained his majority, is in a habitual state of imbecility, of madness,

or of frenzy, any relative is authorised to demand his *interdiction*. The application is laid before the *Tribunal de première instance*; the tribunal questions the family council as to the state of the individual whose *interdiction* is demanded; it then examines the individual himself, and if there be grounds for it, appoints a provisional administrator to take care of him and his property. Here things are by no means done in the same manner. The English so highly value the liberty of the individual, that they cannot be brought to understand the meaning of the words: *conseil de famille*, *conseil judiciaire*, "interdiction. For them there is no middle course between being declared mad, or left free to use, or abuse, one's property as one pleases. Hence the trial I speak of. Hence, also, the resolution taken by Mr. Frederick Windham's relatives, as soon as they had decided upon depriving him of the administration of his property, to accumulate against him every possible and imaginable proof of mental aberration, without being deterred from it by the fear of scandal.

Do not suppose, however, that this protracted, costly, and disgusting trial was inevitable, as regards the fact of its being immeasurably long, ridiculously expensive, and excessively revolting. If, instead of examining Mr. Frederick Windham at the end of the proceedings, they had examined him at the commencement, immediately after the statement set forth against him by the counsel of his dear relatives, the jury would have been convinced, without going further, that this young man, whatever extravagances he might have committed, was not *mad*. But, in that case, good-bye to the fine speeches purchased so dearly! good-bye to the enormous fees pocketed by the lawyers! Could they, indeed, dispense with swallowing the oyster, when law would eat up the very shells, were they only eatable? This seems to have struck the worthy Mr. Samuel Warren, who presided over the pleadings in his quality of Master in Lunacy, an expression which I should be strongly tempted to translate, looking at the conduct of this excellent man, by the phrase *passé maître en fait de folie*. He therefore allowed the water to flow on gently to the river. The defiling past of the witnesses took place with a solemn slowness, which none of them had any reason to regret.

The jury listened with a patience valued at three guineas a day. Sir Hugh Cairns, Mr. Karslake, Mr. Montague Cham-

bers, and Mr. Coleridge, said all they wished to say, and were as long about it as they pleased. The amusing spectacle was afforded of Doctors *tant pis* and Doctors *tant mieux*, talking beyond all bounds, but, as you may suppose, without being able to agree as to what ought to be understood by folly, what by imbecility, what by idiotey, what by mental alienation, what by *dementia*, what by illusions, and incoherent rambling, and hallucinations.

Then, when the time came, after an inquiry of thirty-four days, to arrive at a conclusion which it would have been quite possible to obtain in thirty-four minutes by the examination of the patient, the Master in Lunacy suddenly declared, in order that nothing might be wanting to this immense farce, that he could not examine Mr. Frederick Windham in public; that his sensibility was opposed to it; that it would affect his nerves! Thereupon the public was obliged to withdraw; and the unfortunate wretch who, for thirty-four days, had been in the pillory, passed through his examination in such a manner that there was no choice but to pronounce him of a sound mind, or thereabouts.

Thus did our hero get out of danger, but not the same man that he was when he became entangled in it. The law had ruined him in part, in order that he might remain free to ruin himself entirely. The verdict was, that "Mr. Frederick Windham was a person of sane mind, sufficiently sane to take care of himself, his houses, his lands, his goods, and his chattels."

The public, comprising those who have nothing at all, was enchanted to learn that henceforth no one would be tempted to prevent a Windham from enriching, as much as he pleased, any Agnes Willoughby whose merits might need encouragement. So rapturous was the transport of the audience, that the Master in Lunacy was unable to repress the applause. The English papers would have us believe that this applause was addressed only to the principles of liberty, saved from the attacks of a family plot. For my part, I am quite willing to take their word for that. But, frankly, is it honouring that great principle in a worthy manner, to carry as it were in triumph those who only use it to give the reins to their passions, and to indulge their most foolish caprices?

LETTER LIII.

A REVULSION OF OPINION.

February 11th, 1862.

AM I really in the same country where I was a month ago? Is the air which now surrounds me the same which I breathed then? Or must I conclude from all that I see, from all that I hear, that public opinion in this country is like the scenery of an opera, where a horrible cavern is succeeded, all in a minute, by a smiling landscape?

What a sudden change in the attitude of England towards the United States!

Only a fortnight ago, even after the peaceful solution given to the *Trent* question, the generous friends of peace were very near being declared traitors to their native land. The wind was in the war quarter. Neutrality between the Northern and the Southern States was looked upon as a bubble, as a policy fit only for such dreamers as Mr. Cobden or Mr. Bright. The crime of treason against the human race, committed by Commodore Davis, was denounced with a voice like a trumpet-call. It was sworn that the destruction of the port of Charleston was complete and irreparable, and called for vengeance. Everybody burned to cut short the scandal of a blockade declared to be ineffective; and, at the same time, by an inconsistency strangely naïve, this *ineffective* blockade was cursed as having *the effect* of stopping in an absolute manner the transport of that precious cotton which is the wealth of England and the life of Lancashire. Lastly, the English people—a thing curious enough to be noticed in the history of national changes—adopted against America the language so long directed against itself by the neutral Powers—the English people seemed on the point of taking in hand the great cause of the liberty of the seas.

To-day, a tack in exactly the opposite direction. Neutrality is recommended as the true policy of England, at least for the present. Credit is even taken for having practised it

in the most exemplary fashion. The anathemas on the subject of the port of Charleston have already passed out of date. People accustom themselves to the idea of a blockade as an evil which, after all, is only temporary. Doubts are beginning to be expressed that the melancholy situation of Lancashire may possibly be due to other causes than the embargo laid by the war upon cotton. And the question of the right of search occupies, in the thoughts of the English people, the place it had always occupied up to the present time!

If among your readers there are any who hesitate to believe in such a sudden and extraordinary change as I am pointing out, I will refer them to the speeches delivered, on Thursday last, at the opening of Parliament. From Lord Palmerston to Mr. Disraeli, from Lord Russell to Lord Derby, every speaker expressed the opinion that the attitude of England towards America ought to be expectant and pacific.

Was it possible, I ask, to speak of the relationship that exists between England and the United States (*a kindred population*) in terms more tender than those employed by the Prime Minister? Could Mr. Cobden himself have proclaimed in more distinct language than that used by Lord Palmerston the principle of non-intervention? And what more peremptory declaration could the friends of peace have expected from the chief of the Cabinet than one thus enunciated: "From that position of strict neutrality, it is our intention not to depart."

As for Lord Russell—one slightly ambiguous sentence apart—his were honeyed words. Not only did he, also, insist upon the necessity of an inviolable, "unimpaired" neutrality, but he expressed the hope of seeing the American people do justice to the conduct of the European Powers towards "that mighty Union in which liberty had for eighty years been established." He went further, and while acknowledging that some vessels had succeeded in running the blockade, he laid it down as a fact, that the force employed to prevent access to the blockaded ports was sufficient; whence it follows that, after all, the blockade is effective according to the definition given in treaties.

Now take Lord Derby's speech, whom there would be no calumny in suspecting of some kindly feeling for the South—well, Lord Derby, though leader of the Opposition, warmly congratulated Ministers on their having understood in this

American question what was England's interest, which he characterised in these words: "We have most interest in remaining neutral."

Did Mr. Disraeli say less? No: he said a great deal more. He praised, almost in a tone of enthusiasm, the conduct of the American statesmen, whom he represented as having acted, in their difference with England, "in a virile and courageous manner;" and he declared that it concerned the honour of the English people to give a generous interpretation to both the words and the acts of the United States Government.

Thus North America, at the present moment, seems to have all the suffrages in her favour, for it is important to observe that the language of the press is in harmony with that of Parliament, the commentary being this time a respectful echo of the text.

Free to the English after that to treat us as a fickle people—their favourite accusation. I know not if I deceive myself, but I doubt if France has ever, within the space of one month, presented the spectacle of such a complete change of opinion.

It is not that the English character wants steadiness. The reason of these sudden changes lies in the profound disdain professed by England for all that is pure idea, abstraction, principle. Here the fact is law; the interest of the moment is the supreme rule. Now, as facts vary and interest follows these variations, no wonder if frequently the opinion of the morrow is not that of the day before.

There is a sovereign in Europe whom I have heard judged in a thousand different ways by the same men since I arrived in England, according as his policy was in conformity with, or in opposition to, the interests of the English nation. On this side of the Channel the sovereign of whom I speak has been in turns—and sometimes at only a fortnight's interval—the object of unbounded admiration, and the butt of unbridled attacks. Serve England, you are a great man; oppose her, I dare not tell you what you are.

There remains to be discovered what it is, from the point of view of English interests, that can have so strongly influenced the movement of the scale, which, a few weeks ago, leaned so decidedly in favour of the South.

With regard to this, I find in a journal exercising great influence the following passage directed against certain imprudent words which fell from Sir Robert Peel in the discussion on the Address. I recommend this passage to the attention of your readers :—

“ It is essential in the highest degree that the Government should not offend without necessity the Irish priests, and in the actual state of our relations with America, it is particularly desirable that Ministers should always express themselves, in public, respecting Mr. Lincoln’s Government, with studied courtesy. Well, Sir Robert Peel had the tact, in a speech of ten minutes’ duration, to attack the Federal Government with reference to the ill-success of its campaigns, and at the same time to insinuate that the Irish priests were striving to excite the peasants against the landowners. There are wiser members of the Government than Sir Robert Peel. The ordeal to which their nervous system was subjected made them shudder, and they left nothing undone to hasten the close of the discussion.”

What do you think of this candid revelation, coming from perhaps the least simple-minded journal that has ever existed ?

Another consideration. Before the opening of the Chambers in France, many persons here flattered themselves with the hope that, in the event of a conflict with the North, England would be actively supported by the Imperial Government. You know how these illusions were dispersed.

And shall we count for nothing the great victory gained in Kentucky by the Federal troops ? One must live in England, and live there for a long time, to form an exact idea of the enormous influence exercised in that *practical* country by—success. On no point of the globe is it more true to say : “ *rien ne réussit comme le succès.* ” Elsewhere, victory is a means of being right in fact ; here, it is a means of being right in principle. You cannot imagine to what extent, in the opinion of the English, the Federals were wrong in allowing themselves to be beaten at Bull’s Run, or to what point the Confederates were wrong in allowing themselves to be beaten in Kentucky. O worship of the accomplished fact ! If ever thou comest to want altars, it will not be in this corner of the world which I inhabit ! When Lord Palmerston was accused and convicted of having falsified the despatches relative to the

Affghan war, in what do you suppose his defence consisted? To deny the falsification was simply impossible. But it was so long ago! It was ancient history! The witty Viscount asked the House of Commons, with the smile of triumph on his lips, if, when it had so much pressing business on its hands, it intended to waste its time in discussing an accomplished fact? There was nothing more to be said!

The question, then, for the Northerners is to show that they are the strongest. Let them get another victory, and people here will not be far from recognising the so well demonstrated justice of their cause! *

But there is one side of the question affording a still more interesting subject for study.

Do you remember that in one of my preceding letters I assigned for the distress in Lancashire quite another cause than the absence of cotton? Do you remember my remarks on the glutting of markets? My views on that subject differed so widely from those which were going the round of all the newspapers, whether in England or in France, that they seemed to be somewhat paradoxical. I little expected the honour of seeing my testimony confirmed—by whom?—by Lord Derby. This is what he said, in so many words, on Thursday last, in the House of Lords:—

“ We have submitted, and submitted without a murmur, to the interruption of our commerce as the result of this war. And it does the greatest honour to the good sense and patriotism of the working class of the manufacturing population of this country. It is not, however, so much to the masters as to the workmen that I allude, seeing that the stoppage of the trade in cotton could not have happened more opportunely for the interests of our manufacturers than at the actual moment, when all the foreign markets are glutted. If cotton had not failed, an interruption of production would have been, practically, inevitable.”

No one, however, said as much when it was judged expedient to enter upon a war with the United States; but no one cares to keep silence on that point now that public opinion has taken a different course. But, then, why should people continue to indulge in invectives against the authors of the blockade, under the pretence that it is ineffective? So soon as this blockade ceases to be a thorn in the flesh of the English, far

from being interested in cursing it, they become interested in throwing a veil over whatever might render it odious to the neutral Powers, seeing that that is one of the practices on which the maritime sovereignty of the English has rested for centuries.

And why should they display so much ardour in denouncing to the indignation of the world blockades that are not literally effective? Why should they renounce beforehand a means of warfare so potent in their hands? This is what many already begin to ask themselves with a selfish uneasiness which they call patriotism. So long as their wrath against the North preserved its heat, the English lost sight of what had hitherto served as the basis of their maritime supremacy; but now that they are calmer, they begin to remember it. It seems to them hard to sacrifice the advantages which, for a nation whom the sea obeys, belong to the theory of the right of the strongest.

Did not Lord Derby say, on Thursday last, how much he regretted the *sacrifice* consented to in 1856 by Lord Clarendon? Did he not protest against the principle that an enemy's property should be exempted from seizure on board neutral vessels? Did he not declare that such a concession was dangerous for a country like England? Did he not observe, with a menacing complacency, that the arrangement of 1856 did not bind the English people; that that arrangement had not been ratified by the sovereign; that it had neither the obligatory character nor the value of a treaty; that it did not even deserve the title of a convention? Not less symptomatic, though much less important, is the speech delivered by Mr. Urquhart, a week ago, at the Whittington Club. In this speech the abandonment of the right of search was represented as a criminal alienation of the right of property on the seas. According to Mr. Urquhart, England could not abandon that right without degrading herself, without disarming herself, without putting herself, bound hand and foot, at the mercy of France. "In seizing the property of your enemy," he said, "of that enemy against whom you have pronounced sentence of death, you do what it is your *duty* to do; and if you neglect the fulfilment of the *duty* which consists in taking his goods, it is because you prefer to take his life. You change a question of coercion into a question of bloodshed."

I pause, the above being sufficient, I hope, to give you the clue to a revulsion of opinion at which those alone will not be astonished who have long and carefully studied on the spot the genius of England.

LETTER LIV.

ENGLAND, AN ARISTOCRATIC REPUBLIC.

TACITUS says somewhere that it was dangerous even to praise Tiberius. I certainly do not mean to compare our friends of the *Daily Telegraph* with that distrustful Roman emperor, so hard to please! But, verily, I begin to fear that there may be, if not any danger, at least some inconvenience in praising the freeborn citizens of this country, when I see the *Daily Telegraph* take *Le Temps* to task for having said that monarchy in England existed only in name; that, in fact, England was a republic—an aristocratic republic, it is true, but in a position, thanks to the flexibility of its forms, to make to democracy all the concessions required by the spirit of modern society.

M. Scherer, the author of the excellent article of which the last few lines are the summary, will be, I fancy, somewhat astonished to learn that this eulogium, the highest which can possibly be bestowed on any constitution, has caused a jar to the patriotic fibre of our friends of the *Daily Telegraph*, who saw in it almost an insult to "the gracious lady, who is the mistress," to use their own words, "of our knees and hearts." They accuse, or seem to accuse you, of having questioned the fervour of their monarchic religion, and they appeal from this unjust suspicion cast upon their affection for the Queen, manifested on so many occasions, to the homage they render to her virtues, to their concern for her sorrows, to the mourning they wear for the death of Prince Albert, and to the tender solicitude of the prayers which accompany the future king of England while on his travels. In truth, there is no making anything out of it. *Le Temps*, it seems to me, never spoke of

the Queen of England but in terms of grave and respectful approbation; its commentaries on the death of Prince Albert have partaken more of the nature of a funeral oration than of an historical criticism; and no journal has assigned a more lofty character to the sentiment which made of the Queen's grief a real public sorrow. Now, as *Le Temps* is not, that I am aware of, edited by courtiers, or written with a view to Court favour, it might perhaps have been entitled to hope that its desire to be just to all, and before all, would not be questioned by any one.

Such, however, has not been the case. But that is not the only point to be taken up in the article to which I am directing your attention.

Certainly, if there is in France a journal which has shown itself, without infatuation but with sincerity, the friend of England, which has recommended the English alliance on every note in the gamut, which has cried up the institutions of this country, has contrasted the liberty enjoyed therein with the system of compression practised elsewhere, and has brought conspicuously forward the great qualities of the English nation whenever an opportunity occurred for so doing, that journal is *Le Temps*. But because it has comported itself towards England, as it does towards France, whom it refrains from flattering, so much it loves her; because it has presumed sometimes to criticise what, on this side of the Channel, appeared deserving of criticism, it is decidedly marked with the stamp of reprobation, and denied even the right of praising what may be thought worthy of praise! Truly, there are people hard to please!

Let the monarchical zeal of our friends of the *Daily Telegraph* cease to be alarmed. In asserting that monarchy in England is a monarchy only in name, *Le Temps* had no intention of saying anything that could be reasonably complained of by the most passionate admirers of Queen Victoria, or by those who will longest wear mourning for Prince Albert. Queen Victoria's glory, in fact, consists in having understood better than the *Daily Telegraph* appears to do, that between the monarchy represented by herself and the monarchy which is, according to the etymology of the word, "the government of a single individual," there is nothing in common but the name.

Yes, it is precisely because she has understood that, because she has kept strictly within her part, because she has been, as the *Times* lately stated, a constitutional Queen to the letters, that Victoria is popular in this country. As to Prince Albert, his death would not have been so deeply lamented, had it not been known that he never used his influence over the mind of the Queen to urge her to step beyond the limits traced by the Constitution round her throne.

Permit me to repeat here an anecdote related by Lord Russell in the House of Lords, with the avowed object of endearing the memory of Prince Albert to the English people. Speaking one day to Earl Russell of the attitude that ought to be adopted by royalty in presence of a change of ministers, Prince Albert said to him:—"My opinion is, that whether he belonged to one party or another, the utmost confidence should prevail between the sovereign and the minister who came forward in Parliament as the ostensible possessor of power."

Now, either that means nothing at all, or it means this, that in presence of the choice of the Parliament, and even in what concerns the purely executive power, the sovereign in England ought to abnegate his own opinions, his own private sentiments, and almost his personal sympathies or antipathies. What is there, in common, I ask, save only the name, between a form of government characterised after this fashion, and that which, in the famous classification of Aristotle, is defined by the words *monos* and *arche* (the government of one)? And who can deny that the republic (*res publica*) has something to do with the institutions of a country in which the will of one is so completely subordinated to that of the men who represent, or are supposed to represent, the whole nation?

If our friends of the *Daily Telegraph* are displeased that it should be so, we are sorry for it; but, with Earl Russell, we feel grateful to Prince Albert for having expressed such opinions, and we cannot blame England for possessing institutions, the fundamental principle of which is, that everything must bend before the idea of the *res publica*. It is strange that it should be an English journal, and a Liberal journal too, that makes it a crime in us; and the fact would be rather amusing, if it were not so very sad.

Strange enough, to the assertion of *Le Temps*, that "England is in reality a *republic*," the *Daily Telegraph* thinks the following to be a triumphant reply: "Let *Le Temps* learn that we are a *commonwealth*." This is opposing *bonnet blanc* to *blanc bonnet*. No doubt the English are a *commonwealth*. We have every reason to congratulate them, on that account, and why the *Daily Telegraph* gets angry, is more than I can make out.

It is true there are individuals in this country who profess a sort of Platonic love for what they call the balance of powers, and these would believe the political reputation of England to be compromised in the world, if even the slightest doubt were raised as to the perfect equality of power which, they pretend, exists between the Crown, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. But, with all deference to them, this equality, however good to proclaim for the greater glory of the theory, does not hold in practice. Delolme makes a remark which solves the question, when he says, "The English monarchy is a vessel thoroughly equipped, but from which Parliament can, at its pleasure, withdraw the water." The right of voting the supplies is, in fact, in the hands of the House of Commons, a right which, in practice, overtops all the others.

The King, in England, is invested with the power of making peace and war; but to what is this power reduced, if the will of the King happens to be opposed to that of the House of Commons, which alone disposes absolutely both of the sinews of war and of the means of carrying on the Government during peace? The right of voting the supplies is a weapon of incalculable power. Charles II. knew it well when the refusals of the House of Commons drove him to concluding secretly with Louis XIV the disgraceful treaty which made him pay, for the annual payment of £200,000, the part of pensioner of the Court of France.

The King, in England, has the choice of Ministers, but in theory only; for, in practice, the Ministers are chosen by the majority of the House of Commons, since, without the assent of the majority, no Cabinet can remain in power.

The King, in England, can dissolve the Parliament; but at the risk of seeing it reappear more hostile than ever, if the royal will happen to be in opposition with that of the electors.

Wilkes, thrice sent back to them, was thrice re-elected; and you know what became of Charles I. in consequence of his having too freely exercised the right of dissolution.

The King, in England, is armed with the right of veto; but when, armed with the far more real right of tightening the strings of the purse, the House of Commons sets its heart upon a thing, is the authority of the royal veto worth much? To use the words of Benjamin Constant, "the assembly gets angry without being disarmed."

The King, in England, is the Head of the Church; but he can neither meddle with the established form of worship, nor profess the religion specially interdicted by the State.

The King, in England, enjoys the right of pardon—and it is the noblest of his prerogatives; but as it is only exercised for the sake of individuals, and very rarely, it does not constitute, properly speaking, a power.

The King, in England, is inviolable; but this inviolability remains subjected to the sovereign will of the nation, as was proved in the cases of Charles I. and James II.

The King, in England, leans upon the principle of hereditary descent; but this principle itself may be thrust aside whenever it pleases the nation. Was not James II. deposed, not merely in his own person; but in that of his son, the legitimate and natural heir to the throne?

The truth is, that of all the prerogatives of the Crown in England, there is not one which does not present, if I may say so, a character of subordination to what is, or is thought to be, the national pleasure.

Furthermore, the principal utility of the monarchy, as the English have come to regard it, consists in constantly occupying, at the summit of society, a place which they believe could not be left vacant without danger. I find this laid down with a precision bordering on rudeness in a learned review of Leckie's work on the British Government, published in the *Edinburgh Review*:

"Considering, as we do, that the principal advantage of the monarchy consists in removing all occasion for a struggle, with reference to the first place in the State, and in neutralising that high position by separating it from all idea of merit and popularity in the occupant, we could not without inconsistency allow it more real power than is absolutely necessary for

the accomplishment of the object which we propose to ourselves."

' In describing the impotency of the Crown in England to make its will prevail over that of the nation, is it our intention to cast discredit upon the English institutions? In truth, our object is exactly the reverse. In this powerlessness lies one of the surest guarantees of that liberty of which the English are so justly proud. Unfortunately, the chance of descent does not always place upon the throne such queens as the one who now occupies it, and Victoria must not make the English forget George III.

However—and we trust that, on this point, at all events, the *Daily Telegraph* will agree with us—the political institutions of England are amenable to very serious objections as regards the share they allow to the democratic element in the composition of the House of Commons. So long as the working-class is not represented, there will be much left to desire. But as our colleague, M. Scherer, has well remarked, such is the admirable elasticity of the institutions of this country, that they easily lend themselves to the development of every kind of progress. When the right time comes, liberty in England will know how to yield to democracy the part that belongs to it.

I leave to our colleague the task of thoroughly sifting a subject on which he is better able to throw light than I am; but being uncertain whether the article in the *Daily Telegraph* had fixed his attention, or even come to his knowledge, I have felt it my duty not to pass over in silence an attack which appeared to me altogether uncalled for, especially as concerns your pretended hostility to England. The *Daily Telegraph*, as I have more than once observed, is a journal very well written, widely circulated, influential, and devoted to that course of liberal ideas which is also ours; an additional reason for asking it to be just. What does it mean, when it speaks of the hostility of *Le Temps* to England? Does it mean to say that our sentiments towards her are not pure idolatry; that we detect some dark spots in her firmament; that our admiration for what she presents that is great and beautiful, does not blind us to her defects; that we do not regard her as faultless, and do not pretend to be, after all, more English than the English themselves? If that be so, the

Daily Telegraph is right. But so far, we might as well be accused of cherishing hostile feelings towards France, because we honour her enough not to flatter her, and because, loving her more than ourselves, we love her less than Truth.

LETTER LV.

NATIONAL EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.

March 2nd, 1862.

A GREAT and noble question is at this moment submitted to England—that of national education; and the reforms proposed by Government, some days ago, through the medium of Lord Granville and Mr. Lowe, deserve to fix the attention of all who take an interest in the intellectual elevation of the poorer classes, the general progress of enlightenment, and the development of civilization in this most powerful country.

The idea of “national education” in England dates only a few years back; it had a very difficult birth; round its cradle uprose thousands of religious sects by which it ran much risk of being stifled; it was unable to move forward, and even now it advances only in groping its way through the midst of fanatics who are not far from crying to it in the words of Bossuet: “You grope your way over Jesus Christ.”

The religious element interpreted by a sectarian spirit is the enemy with which progress had to contend for the last forty years, and which has not yet been vanquished in England by the principle of “national education:” the watchword of every religious sect, from Ultramontane Catholics to the most independent Congregationists, having always been: “If they do not teach our particular dogmas, it is better that nothing at all be taught.”

As the *Westminster Review* very wittily and appropriately reminded us the other day, the Emperor Charles-Quint was accustomed to say, in speaking of Milan, “My cousin Francis I. and myself understand each other perfectly with regard to

Milan; he wants to have it, and so do I." This is exactly what is said by every sect on the subject of the education of children. If Milan perish, Charles-Quint will console himself, provided Milan do not belong to Francis I.

When, at the commencement of the present century, that is to say, at a date when the idea of State intervention in the matter of education had not yet occurred to men's minds, the Quaker Lancaster having proposed to found, by means of voluntary contributions, schools in which religious education should be confined to the reading of the Bible, there rose up against him from the bosom of the Anglican Church a terrible clamour. What! with the wholly mundane view of attracting to the sources of human knowledge the greatest possible number of children, any one dared to propose to generalise religious instruction! As if the Bible were sufficient! As if the particular Catechism of the Anglican Church were not the indispensable pivot of the knowledge to be acquired in order to become a well-informed man and a good citizen! This Lancaster could be no other than an emissary of Satan! Down with the *deist*! That was the word employed by the fanatics of those times to devote their adversaries to the infernal deities. It has ever since been replaced by the epithet *godless*—it being, of course, well understood that the members of any one sect are always *godless* in the eyes of the members of a rival sect.

However, as Fontaine well observes, *on ne peut contenter tout le monde et son père* ("you cannot satisfy all the world and his father"). And so, one fine morning, thought Dr. Hook, Vicar of Leeds.

At that period the idea of State intervention in the matter of education had already passed into circulation. In 1839 a Committee of the Council for Education had been appointed, and as the Minutes of the Council recommended the foundation of schools in which religious instruction should be of a general character, the special portion of this instruction being left to the ministers of the different sects, the Dissenters were in favour of the adoption of a national system, because they saw in it a tendency to wrest education from the hands of the Established Church, which naturally opposed the scheme. But, in 1843, the Dissenters all of a sudden faced about. Sir James Graham having brought in his Bill for the

establishment of industrial schools, they took it into their heads that the sacred cause of nonconformity was imperilled, and they hailed the attempt made by Government to raise the intellectual condition of the working-classes with cries of "Godless!" and "No Popery!"

Such, then, was the state of things when Dr. Hook, reflecting upon the difficulty of satisfying everybody, published a pamphlet, in which he proposed that the State should undertake to provide the people with a secular education without reference to theological distinctions. A certain portion of time, however, was to be devoted to the religious instruction of children by the pastors of the different shades of belief; and in this manner every one would have been called upon to fulfil the function that belonged to him. The State would have formed citizens, which is its proper duty, and would have left to those whom it concerned the task of forming Churchmen, Wesleyans, Muggletonians, &c., &c.

Poor Dr. Hook! He fancied that he had conciliated everybody, that he had set apart a neutral ground for disputants, that he had proclaimed the truce of God. But theologians are naturally of a bellicose temperament, and, instead of making peace with one another, they united only to wage war upon him who held out to them the olive branch. What! An education purely *secular*, which the State should be bound to provide! Let the State stand back! One of the most zealous in raising this new outcry was Mr. Edward Baines, according to whom, if the State were permitted to interfere in the matter of education, it would be all over; the logic, the invincible logic of things would cause everything, absolutely everything, to be placed at the mercy of the Government: literature, newspapers, the pulpit, the poor man's food, his hovel, and his rags. One of my friends, Mr. Church, a man of good parts, who greatly distinguished himself in the polemics of this period, replied to the arguments of Mr. Baines by very striking observations. They are worth quoting. "In truth, the hypochondriac who fancies himself made of glass, must walk about with a more profound feeling of security than the unhappy creature is capable of who believes to such a point in the logic of things. Given, for example, the postal service, such as it has been confided to Government, there is no reason why the Government, in

virtue of the logic of things, should not monopolise absolutely everything. If it is charged with the carriage of letters which contain not only what man confides to man, but also what man confides to woman, why should not Government be charged, at the same time, with the carriage of our goods, nay, even of our persons? And, if once possessed of the monopoly of a single branch of commerce, why should it not be in possession of all without exception?" Mr. Church went on to ask Mr. Baines why his own logic was not as rigorous as the "logic of things," and why he did not go so far as to demand the suppression of the national postal service?

The fact is, that if there is a question in the world which requires the intervention of the State, it is the education of the children of the poor. It is impossible reasonably to apply to this question the principle of "supply and demand," for the simple reason that, on the part of the poor man, too ignorant to appreciate the advantages of education, the "demand" scarcely exists at all, and for this yet more decisive reason, that the *means* of acquiring instruction is absolutely wanting to the poor man. But society is interested in the highest degree that a large proportion of its members should not grovel in ignorance, in which vice germinates, and which so frequently engenders crime. To what does this amount? Here are laws which we are bound to observe, on pain of a chastisement which is sometimes terrible, but we are not to have the right of learning how to observe them! The right to education is necessarily contained in the duty of obedience.

The principle of the intervention of the State in the matter of education has thus at last triumphed even in England, where the doctrine of "let alone" always had such deep roots. Only, the application of this principle presents itself at present under the form of a compromise: in other words, the system, in its actual phase, consists in the establishment and maintenance of schools intended for the poor, by means of funds, one part of which proceeds from voluntary contributions, and of which another part is furnished by the State, under the title of "annual grants."

To aid the efforts of private beneficence, so far as concerns every school in which children are provided with secular instruction, combined with daily reading of the Bible according

to the authorised version, is the mission of what is called the "Privy Council." Up to the present time the grants have been of three kinds, namely, the capitation grant, which is proportioned to the number of pupils; the grant for certificated masters, which refers to teachers supplied with a diploma; and, lastly, the grant for pupil teachers, which is for the benefit of younger masters of an inferior grade.

The capitation grant is given for every child who has attended the school for 176 days and upwards, in the twelve months. It is granted only on the condition that fourteen shillings a-head are spent in the school. In this manner the Government gave last year the sum of £77,000 sterling.

The grant for certificated masters is an augmentation of salary annually offered by the State to masters having a diploma. This augmentation is at the rate of £15 for every £30 paid to the master by the manager of the school. This gift comprises various special allowances having reference to the teaching of drawing, of the Gaelic dialect, of the language peculiar to the inhabitants of Wales, &c. &c. The funds allotted under this head rose, last year, to the sum of £122,000 sterling.

As to the grant for pupil teachers, it is for the benefit of those who, having entered the school at the age of thirteen, have remained in it for five consecutive years. For the first year the payment is £10, which goes on gradually increasing till it reaches £20. The whole is provided by the State, without the managers of schools being called upon to give anything on their side. The expenditure, last year, was £300,000.

The total of the three denominations of grants taken together may, therefore, be estimated at an annual outlay of nearly half a million sterling, and constitutes, strictly speaking, the budget of national education in England.

This bastard system of State intervention is open to many objections.

First of all, it is extremely complicated, and imposes upon the "Privy Council" a burden hard to be borne. You will be able to form an idea of this when I tell you—with Mr. Lowe's Report before me—that there are not less than 6897 schools to inspect, and that the number of managers, certificated teachers, assistant teachers, pupil teachers, &c., &c., with

whom the "Privy Council" is in communication, with whom it has to maintain an endless correspondence, and to whom it pays money, directly, is not less than 35,331. It is, in truth, an army, as you see, and, what is worse, an army ignorant of official usages, which cares little for discipline, is essentially argumentative, loves to write long letters, and feels dissatisfied with receiving short ones. If you had heard Mr. Lowe the other day complain of the work with which he and his colleagues are overwhelmed, I am sure you would have pitied him.

But this complication of the system is nothing compared to what Mr. Lowe has aptly termed its "partiality." What is the number of schools of which the "Privy Council" comes in aid? I have already stated, 6897, while the number of those which receive no help is 15,952! Take the parishes that are in communication with the "Privy Council," and you will find in Oxfordshire, 21 out of 339; in Herefordshire, 5 out of 130; in Devonshire, 2 out of 245; and so on. Is it reasonable? Is it politic? Is it just?

Add to this, that the schools aided by the "Privy Council," though founded for the children of the poor, are not really of any great advantage except for children who belong to a well-to-do class, because these alone can remain long enough to profit by the instruction that is imparted in them. Past the age of ten or twelve, the poor man's child is obliged to leave school. Not that he is turned out of it, but his parents call him to them, in order that he, too, may work for wages and help them to earn a livelihood. Unhappily, the "Privy Council" cannot prevent that, nor can the evil be remedied by such reforms as are only connected with the system of public education.

It is beyond a doubt, and Lord Granville mentioned it sorrowfully, that in the schools aided by the State, the number of children called upon to attend the classes is 2,200,000, while those who do attend are only 920,000.

It would be something if those at least received effective instruction who give themselves the trouble to go and seek it where it is to be found! But no. In 1858, on the motion of Sir John Pakington, a Royal Commission was appointed with the special mission of investigating the real state of things. The School Inspectors had made fine reports, but

what a cruel contradiction did they receive from the less complaisant report of the Commissioners! These pitiless Commissioners declared that for every four children, there was hardly one, of whom it could be said that it had received any instruction at all.

Again, we read in a report by Mr. Watkins, quoted by Mr. Lowe, the following characteristic passage:—"Instructive books, excellent maps, expensive apparatus; all this is as disproportioned to the use made of them, as would be a park of artillery employed to disperse a flock of sparrows."

Such a state of things demanded an immediate remedy; thence the Revised Code, drawn up in accordance with the observations made by the Commissioners of whom I have been speaking. But this Revised Code having itself appeared susceptible of revision, the Government introduced into it certain modifications which have been submitted to the judgment of the legislators of this country,—in the House of Lords by Lord Clarendon, and by Mr. Lowe in the House of Commons. To enter into the details of the proposed reforms would be tedious. It will suffice to direct your attention to the chief point. The Government propose to suppress all the different grants, the objects of which I have explained above, and to replace them by one sole grant, on the following basis: school managers are to be entitled to one penny for each pupil, for every hour of attendance, after the first hundred. But examinations are to be held, and if the result should prove that the child cannot read, one-third of the sum is to be retained by Government, which will also keep back a third if the child cannot reckon, and the whole in the event of the child being unable to read, to reckon, and to write.

The meaning of this is, that the State is quite willing to give money, but on the condition that its money shall do some little good to those for whose sake it is given. Can anything be more reasonable? For, after all, why should the State be expected to throw its purse out of the window? Well, you cannot fancy what opposition has been roused by this scheme. Managers, certificated masters, pupil teachers, and I know not how many others, utter clamours that would make the birds fall stunned to the ground. Pamphlets have been hurled after pamphlets! We have seen petitions, observations, reclamations, and protestations pouring down like

hail. Those who are required to earn the subsidies which are paid to them—for, in fact, that is the only point at issue—invoke the doctrine of vested rights; pretend that they are robbed by the conditional character assigned to the donation made to them, and loudly threaten the legislators who may be bold enough to vote in favour of such a Bill, that they will punish them for their audacity in the arena of the forthcoming elections.

The fanatics, on their side, also go about scattering alarm. What will become of religious instruction if masters are induced by the temptation of personal interest to direct all their efforts to facilitate the progress of secular instruction? To know how to read, and write, and reckon, what is all that worth? The object at stake is the salvation of the soul! And these worthy people do not seem to have the slightest idea that to be able to read his Bible and Prayer Book, a man must first have learned to read.

However, let not this storm alarm you. Progress has witnessed many much worse.

Not that the problem of national education would be solved by the proposed reforms. Far, very far from that. It is merely a step towards the goal; nothing more. What matter! the rest will follow of itself. England has never proceeded otherwise. In the path of progress, she advances with measured steps; but there is this good point about her, that she never retrogrades.

LETTER LVI.

WHY M. RICASOLI, AS MINISTER, IS AGREEABLE TO THE ENGLISH.

March 12th, 1862.

Whoso has spectacles of his own does not usually borrow those of his neighbour to read with. So acts England. The fall of the Ricasoli Ministry has caused her no satisfaction, but for reasons which are peculiar to herself, and which may very likely be quite different to ours.

In the eyes of the English, M. Ricasoli was recommended

by his great firmness of character, by his ardent desire to realise the unity of Italy, and still more so by his decided resolution to brave to the utmost the wrath of the Vatican. M. Ricasoli had succeeded in irritating the priests quite as much as it was given to M. Cavour to do it; and for this, Protestant England was naturally grateful to him. But was there nothing in M. Ricasoli that England loved more than all that? I fear there was. M. Ricasoli was looked upon here as the personification of that policy which has for its device: *l'Italia farà da se.*

A nation which is in a position to recover its independence is bound to trust to itself alone the care of its destinies; but whenever Might crushes Right, it is desirable that oppression should have to reckon with the human brotherhood, and that the susceptibilities of national pride should not prevail over the sentiment of the solidarity of nations. Perhaps M. Ricasoli did not sufficiently understand that Italy, in the act of emancipating herself, might lean on the arm of a friendly nation without blushing; perhaps he conceded too much to the inspirations of a patriotic pride, otherwise very excusable; but as it was France that he seemed anxious to keep at arm's length, the English were little concerned to find fault with him.

Why make a secret of what the English themselves have never cared to keep secret? The idea of the heroic service rendered to Italian independence by the arms of France has always been to them a subject of involuntary bitterness. That the independence of Italy should be finally secured; that her unity should come forth triumphant out of so many ordeals; and that as regards the temporal power at least of the Pope, the famous cry of "No Popery!" may henceforth be raised from one end of the earth to the other—the accomplishment of all these grand things is as ardently desired by the English as by France, but they have no wish that they should be accomplished by her, or through her help. When the acquisition of Savoy took place, outcries arose here on the part of those who fancied they already saw standing before them the spectre of imperial conquests; but I am convinced that in this country really political minds were delighted, at heart, to be able to disseminate doubts as to the elevated character of the French intervention, by denying the dis-

interestedness of the victories of Magenta and Solferino. It is exactly the same with the occupation of Rome by our troops. It is desired that it should cease, because it serves to maintain a power which is not liked; and on the other hand there is almost a feeling of satisfaction in it, because it seems to deprive France of the glory of a policy resolutely generous and without any afterthought.

If this appreciation be, as I think, just, it furnishes the key to the comments which the fall of the Ricasoli Ministry has called forth here. From another point of view, M. Ricasoli was very popular with the English aristocracy because of his noble descent, and of the disdainful haughtiness of his attitude towards the Italian democracy. "Nothing so admirable," says the most aggressive and most contemptuous of English journals: "nothing so admirable as the preponderance taken from the beginning of the Italian movement by the natural leaders of the people; for in time of revolution a country ought to esteem itself fortunate when it can dispense with the services of demagogues." And the same paper, the *Saturday Review*, only forgives Baron Ricasoli the crime of not having repelled the co-operation of Garibaldi, because of his "aversion for democratic thrones."

However, "all's well that ends well," as Shakespeare teaches us. Now, it seems that the King, at the moment of leave-taking, manifested much good feeling towards the unfortunate successor of Cavour; that he pressed his hand, and said to him: "I am sure we shall continue friends;" to which M. Ricasoli replied, like a baron of the middle ages: "My friendship for your Majesty will always grow in proportion to what you do for the redemption of Italy."

It would be very surprising if a man of this stamp did not find favour in England. But if a lively regret is entertained for his fall, not less lively is the regret felt that the personage chosen in his stead should be M. Ratazzi, because it is supposed that this new pilot is prone to believe that he has nothing to fear so long as he carries Caesar and his fortunes. In other words, the same reason that rendered Baron Ricasoli popular in this country causes his successor to be viewed with distrust. In fact, people call him the man of the Tuilleries; they go about repeating in a tone of chagrin that the tricolor displayed by him is white, red, and *blue*, instead of being

white, red, and *green*; in a word, they reproach him for his marked tendency to turn towards Paris.

Another thing displeases them in M. Ratazzi's programme; it is that he seems to be less anxious about Rome than about Venice, whereas in England it is justly imagined that the most urgent affair is the enfranchisement of Rome.

LETTER LVII.

CATHOLICISM IN IRELAND.

March 13th, 1862.

If the moral state of Italy proves that the Papacy does not improve by being looked at too closely, the moral state of Ireland proves, on the other hand, that, seen from afar, the throne of St. Peter may still shine with splendour in the eyes of an ignorant people. Ireland,—that Ireland which is subjected to the laws of a Protestant nation,—is, in this our nineteenth century, the classic land of Catholicism. How should England not be disquieted about such a strange anomaly? It is to Rome, the city of the Popes, that the heart of Ireland clings. London, the city of the Reformation, is aware of that. How, then, is it possible that London should not sigh for the restoration of Rome to Italy? It would not be quite so bad if the priests in Ireland would take the trouble to mask their play! But no: what has lately come to pass in the elections for the county of Longford clearly shows that the Irish people, under the inspiration of their spiritual teachers, regard as their real sovereign, not Queen Victoria, but the Pope.

Two candidates were opposed to one another, Colonel White and Major O'Reilly.

Of the merits of the former I can say but little, for I hardly know him. I have been informed by Irishmen that his grandfather was a small bookseller, addicted to dealing in old books; that one day he found in a dust-coloured folio obtained at the sale of a deceased miser's effects, bank-notes for I forget how much, but for an enormous sum, hidden

away between the leaves; that ever since his trade prospered, and that, owing to this incident, which is almost worthy of a place in a tale of the *Thousand and One Nights*, the descendants of our bookseller became persons of note. All that is possible, but I see no great harm in it. The truth is, that the Irish priests would have forgiven Colonel White for his grandfather being a dealer in old books, if the gallant Colonel had added to his other qualities that of being a Catholic; but such not being the case, they swore that he should not be a member of the House of Commons. Besides, could they hesitate one single instant between him and such a candidate as Major O'Reilly? Major Miles O'Reilly is something more, something better, than a mere Catholic: he is a crusader. It was he who led into Italy that pious Irish Brigade, which was to save, by valorous exploits, the peaceful throne of St. Peter. The expedition was not successful. The blessing of Providence did not, somehow, wait upon the arms which, nevertheless, had been blessed by the Vicar of the Deity; and poor Major O'Reilly was forced to surrender himself a prisoner to the armed representative of an impious cause, who, so far from bestowing upon him the honours of martyrdom, sent him back safe and sound into his own country. Such were his titles to the sympathy of the electors of the county of Longford. One paper has thought fit to quote on this subject the story of Foote, the comedian, who, when he appeared in London for the first time, fancied he would recommend himself to the public by advertising that he was "the nephew of the gentleman who had been hanged a short time before for having killed his own brother." The comparison is certainly a very unjust one; and I leave the responsibility to the journal that indulged in it; but we must admit that one must be furiously devoted to the temporal power of the Pope to find in such antecedents as those of Major O'Reilly a motive for returning him as a member of the Parliament of England!

The worst of it is, that his devoted partisans have not gained the day without staining their victory with blood. The shillelagh played an important and decisive part in this heaven-approved election. In the town of Granard, Colonel White's supporters were assaulted by a frenzied mob; their ears were torn off; and they were sorely beaten, in the presence of the ministers of the God of peace. The Rev. Mr. Gregg, a Protestant

minister, was in danger of losing his life. His son was pelted with stones. It is asserted that houses were sacked and fired. In the town of Longford recourse was obliged to be had to charges of cavalry. In short, an election which began by being a challenge, ended in being a sedition.

If Ultramontane Ireland has intended thereby to give us a foretaste of the manner in which the temporal power of the Pope would make use of elections, when the opportunity occurs, it is not a very encouraging prospect!

But I must tell all. England has much to reproach herself with in reference to Ireland; and in that lies the whole secret of the sovereign influence exercised by the Catholic priests over the Irish population. To them this population, which is allowed to grovel in misery and ignorance, looks up as to its protectors, consolers, and avengers. It is by speaking of his wrongs to the famished and half-clad Irishman that the priests inflame his fanaticism. It is, by incessantly telling him that his troubles come to him through Protestant England, that they accustom him to love the Pope with a fierce and savage love. That the English, in those latter days, have done much more for Ireland than at any former period of their history, is true; but it is not less true, that the native country of O'Connell is one of the most miserable countries on the globe. And yet, whatever be the faults of the Irish, who will deny the aptitude of such an intelligent race to become happy! To aid her in this, is not only England's duty, but also her interest.

LETTER LVIII.

THE POPULAR INSTINCT WITH REGARD TO POLAND.

March 17th, 1862.

In a letter from Talleyrand to Louis XVIII., dated the 25th of October, 1814, an interview of the French diplomatist with the Emperor Alexander is related as follows:—

“*The Emperor Alexander.*—In Paris you were for the re-establishment of a kingdom in Poland: how comes it that you have changed your opinion?”

“Prince Talleyrand.—My opinion, Sire, is still the same. The re-establishment of Poland in its integrity as an independent State is what was mooted in Paris, and what I desired then as I desire it now; but, at present, the only point at issue is the marking out of a frontier of a nature to guarantee the security of Austria and Prussia. That is quite a different question.”

“The Emperor Alexander.—Austria and Prussia have no reason to be uneasy. As for the rest, I have 200,000 men in the duchy of Warsaw; dislodge me thence if you can. I fancied that France owed me something. You are always talking of principles: your public law is nothing to me: I know nothing about it. What value, do you suppose, I attach to your parchments and your treaties?”

The very insolence of these declarations sufficiently shows the magnitude of the peril with which the aggrandizement of the Russian power was thought to threaten western Europe, if it were permitted that the duchy of Warsaw, added to the other fragments of Poland already possessed by Russia, should become, under the name of kingdom, a Russian province. There needed a dam to the torrent. Talleyrand was fully sensible of this. But upon whom could he rely for support? Lord Castlereagh was afraid to offend the Czar, as may be seen from the supplicatory tone of the letter which he wrote to him on the 14th of October, 1814, and in which he besought him to renounce his pretensions, reminding him of the great services England had never ceased to render to Russia since the beginning of the century; and telling him that it was in reality in the interest of Russia that those wars against France had been undertaken which had kept Europe in a state of agitation ever since 1803; that the English Government had assisted Russia in dismembering Sweden, in dismembering Denmark, in dismembering Turkey, in dismembering Persia—pledges of friendship the more meritorious, because it had been necessary to give them in such a manner as not to awaken the apprehensions of public opinion, and so furnish matter for parliamentary attacks. Was not all that enough? Had not the English Government some right to expect that a power in whose favour it had already done so much, would show itself a little more accommodating?

Such was the disposition of Lord Castlereagh’s mind, until,

by insulting the King of Saxony in the name of England, who had given no authority to that effect, the Russian Government imparted to the feelings of the English negotiator the energy in which they were previously deficient. Talleyrand was on the watch for a favourable opportunity. The following conversation, as noted down by his own hand, took place between him and Lord Castlereagh, to whom he had proposed to conclude a secret convention with France:—

Lord Castlereagh.—A convention? It is an alliance, then, you propose?

Prince Talleyrand.—This convention might very easily be concluded without an alliance; but it shall be an alliance, if you wish it. For my part, I have no objection to that.

Lord Castlereagh.—But an alliance supposes a war, to which it might possibly lead, and we must do all we can to avoid war.

Prince Talleyrand.—I agree with you. We must do everything except sacrifice the honour, the justice, and *the future of Europe*.

Lord Castlereagh.—A war would be very unpopular with us.

Prince Talleyrand.—War would be popular with you, if you adopted the course of assigning to it a great purpose—a purpose *truly European*.

Lord Castlereagh.—What purpose?

Prince Talleyrand.—*The re-establishment of Poland.*

The result was that on the 3rd of January, 1815, England, France, Austria, and Sweden, concluded a secret treaty with a view to prevent Russia, backed by Prussia, from incorporating Poland. But Napoleon escaped from the island of Elba. The bonds of the coalition had to be tightened afresh. The battle of Waterloo decided the destinies of the French Cæsar. Russia wrought so well, that she obtained the dismissal of Talleyrand as minister of Foreign Affairs, in return for the indemnity of four millions of francs for which the allies made no claim upon the French Government. Poland was sacrificed.

What does this prove? That in 1815, the statesmen of France, England, and Austria saw more clearly than their successors appear to do at the present day, the immense danger with which Russia, as mistress of Poland, menaces Europe. Diplomatists have never incurred the reproach of being too tender-hearted; and when a man of Talleyrand's

stamp invoked, in favour of Poland, “the honour, the justice, and the future of Europe,” it is reasonable to suppose that of these three considerations the last was not, in his mind, the least conclusive.

Besides, as to the essentially *European* character of the Polish question, we have evidence beyond all suspicion—that of Count Pozzo di Borgo. In a letter to the Emperor Alexander, he observed:—

“The destruction of the political existence of Poland constitutes the whole modern history of Russia. Her progress on the side of Turkey is of a purely territorial, I might even say, of a secondary character, compared to what she has gained on the western frontier. The conquest of Poland has had for its main object the manifold increase of the relations of Russia with the other nations of Europe, *and the opening out to her of a wider field for the exercise of her power, of her genius, as well as for the triumph of her pride, her passions, and her interests.*”

Such is the judgment pronounced on the *European* interest which attaches to the Polish question, by diplomacy itself, speaking by the mouth of one of its high priests.

Foolish and ignorant, then, are those who, affecting an air of profundity, come and tell you that, as regards to Poland and the efforts to be made for her rescue, the soundest policy consists in learning to master and subdue all emotional feeling; that justice and humanity, doubtless, demand the salvation of Poland, but that wisdom has resolved upon the indefinite adjournment of humanity and justice. The preceding quotations prove that not thus was the question viewed, either by Talleyrand—who was certainly not the man to yield to juvenile impulses—or by Lord Castlereagh; and yet Lord Castlereagh dreaded a war with Russia at least quite as much as Lord Palmerston does at the present time.

On which side, then, is wisdom—I mean wisdom in the long run; for short-sighted wisdom does not suffice for the conduct of great affairs? Is it on the side of Lord Palmerston, supported at this moment by the *Times*, the *Morning Post*, and nearly the whole English press, by a majority in the House of Commons, by the aristocratic and mercantile portion of the nation, and by all those, in short, who are for the preservation of peace at the expense of justice, for honour

reduced to a matter of *bargain*, for sympathies that cost nothing, for cheap enthusiasm? Or on the side of those working classes in whose name spoke a deputation which went the other day to remind Lord Palmerston that he is Premier in a country which to the duty of being just joins the power of being generous?

If there were in this nothing more for England than an act of high morality to accomplish, it might be expected that the Government would shrink from the prospect of giving and receiving blows—moral considerations, alas! not being those which Governments usually regard as of the nature of arguments. But to oppose to the encroachments of Russia, which she foresees and dreads, which have been so long the subject of her most cruel anxiety and her most uncontrollable fretfulness, a barrier difficult if not impossible to pass, is for England a manifest, an urgent, a supreme interest. It is not by means of friendly representations, it is not by turning pale whenever the word *war* is pronounced, that she will arrest the almost uninterrupted march of the Russians towards Constantinople and India. England is not entirely in England. Her statesmen ought to know that much; and to appreciate how far the English people, even from a purely selfish point of view, is interested in the reconstitution of Poland, they have only to cast their eyes upon the map.

It would be no trifling game to play, certainly; for if nothing more was attempted than a provisional patching-up of the iniquitous treaties of 1815, it would be better to abstain altogether. To ask in favour of Poland, through a diplomatic channel, the re-establishment of a Constitution which it was almost impossible for the Czar not to violate, and the restitution of liberties which it has also been impossible for him not to trifle with, and the promise of a paternal Government which has so often been seen to manifest itself in the cutting to pieces Polish patriots, would be a piece of puerility which would lie under the additional disadvantage of resembling a comedy. How could Poland, after fifty years of broken pledges, trust to aught else than the miracles of her own despair? What hope is there that diplomacy will succeed, by throwing flowers into it, in filling up the abyss which, gaping for half a century between Poland and her oppressors, has just been so fearfully

enlarged? Were the treaties of 1815 really brought up for revisal, how long would that last? Were peace concluded through the mediation of the Powers, an amnesty granted, and Poland *pardoned*, is it, perchance, to be supposed that she would not soon be called upon to expiate the crime of having wished to live, and of having wished that always? Were a Parliament assembled at Warsaw, what authority would it have in face of a Power occupying the capital and the forts, and necessarily military? Could men just issuing from the convulsions of a desperate insurrection and still trembling from the effects of the struggle, be governed without a *loi des suspects*? And, if it be admitted that the intervention of the Powers must in no circumstance be sanctioned by war, who would dare answer for it, that at the end of a month every man judged dangerous will not be in Siberia? When things have reached the point at which we see them, there is for the nation that was oppressed one serious guarantee of security, but only one—an absolute separation. What Poland asks for, is not a death-throe more or less painful, but life. For her, “to be, or not to be, that’s the question.”

Besides, it cannot be too often repeated, the problem to be solved is a *European* question, as was fully understood by Talleyrand and Lord Castlereagh, and as Pozzo di Borgo explained in the letter already quoted. Even, it being granted, which is absurd, that the treaties of 1815, if faithfully observed by the Czar, would give satisfaction to the *Polish interest*, they would not give satisfaction to the *European interest*, which imperatively demands the re-establishment of Poland; and not—be it observed—of Poland such as the treaties have made her, but such as she was made by nature; that is to say, of Poland resting on the Baltic, and with two large rivers for her frontiers; for it is *that* Poland alone which could serve as a barrier for Europe, and would be capable of saving the West from a Russian inundation.

It is of no use to shut one’s eyes to the necessity derived from this state of things: it will surely impose itself sooner or later, and possibly it may impose itself under circumstances infinitely less favourable.

Popular instinct here, in England, is not deceived in this; though the commonplace great men who lend to interests blinded by selfishness the aid of their deceptive wisdom, seem

incapable of comprehending it. Thus, as frequently happens, the wise are those whose understanding draws its light from the heart. Strange to say, those, on the present occasion, see far before them, who are not so placed as to look from on high.

LETTER LIX.

THE RIGHT OF SEARCH AND THE ENGLISH.

March 20th, 1862.

ON Monday last a debate of incomparable importance, whether regarded from a philosophical, or from a political and commercial point of view, took place in the English House of Commons. This debate was opened on the 12th March by a motion by Mr. Horsfall with the object of declaring "that the actual state of maritime international law, in what concerns belligerents and neutrals, is not of a satisfactory nature, and calls for, at the earliest opportunity, the attention of Government."

There took part in this discussion, which will rank among the most famous of which the House of Commons has ever been the arena, Mr. Horsfall; the Attorney-General; Mr. Liddell; Sir G. C. Lewis, Secretary of State for War; Sir G. Bowyer, Mr. T. Baring, Mr. Lindsay, the Lord Advocate, Sir S. Northcote, Mr. Cave, Lord H. Vane, Mr. Buxton, Mr. Newdegate, Mr. Massey, Mr. Bright, the Solicitor-General, Mr. Walpole, Lord Palmerston, and lastly, Mr. Disraeli. Mr. Cobden, by whom Mr. Horsfall's motion was seconded, who was expected to speak yesterday, and whose presence was longed for with that sort of emotion with which travellers surprised by darkness long for a light—Mr. Cobden was unfortunately confined to his house by indisposition.

The general character of the discussion was deficient, as you will presently see, in that elevation which belonged to the subject; but the interests of England, viewed under two opposite aspects, were pleaded with much depth and eloquence. I say "the interests of England;" and in fact, the question

discussed was well nigh presented as one of life or death for the English people.

• You will remember that it was on the 28th March, 1854, that France and England, united, declared war against Russia.

On that *'same'* day, what the English call an Order in Council was drawn up in the following terms:—

“To preserve the commerce of neutrals from all unnecessary disturbance, Her Majesty consents to renounce, for the present, a part of the rights of a belligerent power which belong to her in virtue of the law of nations. It is impossible for Her Majesty to abandon the exercise of the right, whether of seizing articles contraband of war, or of preventing the conveyance in neutral vessels of the enemy’s despatches, and she must also retain the right of preventing the violation by neutrals of every effective blockade. But Her Majesty renounces the right of seizing the enemy’s property embarked in a neutral vessel, except articles contraband of war.”

On the following day the Emperor of the French, on his part, made the subjoined declaration:—

“His Majesty the Emperor of the French consents for the present to abandon a portion of his rights. His Majesty’s ships will not seize the enemy’s property on board a neutral vessel.”

Thus, at the very commencement of the Crimean War, England departed provisionally from a principle so long defended by her against the entire world, and admitted, “for the present,” the maxim, historically so famous: *Le pavillon courre la marchandise*, or, as the English express it, “Free ships make free goods.” It was the price at which the English Government purchased the Imperial alliance.

The conclusion of the Crimean War gave a definitive character to what until then had been only provisional. On the 16th April, 1856, France, England, Russia, Prussia, Austria, Sardinia, and Turkey *declared*, in concert, that as far as it concerned them, the maritime code should thenceforth repose on the following bases:

1. Privateering is abolished.
2. Free ships make free goods, with the exception of articles contraband of war.
3. Neutral merchandise, with the exception of articles con-

traband of war, is not subject to seizure on an enemy's ships.

4. Blockades, to be binding, must be effective.

This *declaration*—for with this new name it was judged expedient to baptise a real *treaty*—did not suppress the consequences of the right of visit; it only set bounds to them. By admitting that certain objects remained subject to seizure as contraband of war, without defining in a precise manner what was to be understood by those objects, it left the door open to those different interpretations whence had issued so many bitter disputes, and even wars; but, after all, if it were not the definitive consecration of the liberty of the seas, it was at least a long step towards that desirable and glorious consummation.

France, then, could not do otherwise than applaud, for she had, on almost every occasion, been foremost in claiming for neutral Powers the independence of their flags. But had the *declaration* the same chance of being well received in England?

Before I proceed any further, permit me to bring together the most salient points in a speech delivered by Mr. Urquhart, on the 20th of January last, at a meeting held at the Whittington Club:—

“ War ought to be just, because it is a *judicial* fact. Every declaration of war is a sentence of death. The high privilege, therefore, of deciding on peace or war did not belong in Rome to the Consul or the Dictator, to the people or the Senate; it was the supreme attribute of the Fcciales. Would you like to know what, in the hands of England, is the right of search? It is for her the most humane means, and the only efficient means, of executing the sentences she pronounces against another people. I ask of you to be just; but I ask of you, for that very reason, to remain powerful. The right of search is the legitimate confiscation of the enemy's property wherever it may be found. When you have sequestered the property of an individual, do you not consider every attempt to make it pass under another's name as a fraudulent operation? Now, to punish fraud is more than a right, it is a duty. In seizing the property of an enemy, of that enemy upon whom you have passed sentence of death, you are just with humanity; for if, when it is in your power to constrain your enemy by the

seizure of his riches, you neglect to do so, it is because you like better to kill him than to despoil him; it is because you prefer bloodshed to the employment of bloodless means of compulsion. Do you doubt the absolute necessity for you to retain the right of search? Well, then, listen to this. Suppose that you are at war with France, that is to say that you have pronounced against her sentence of death. The order is: "Kill, burn, destroy." But you have not, like France, 500,000 men under arms. You cannot invade France. Where is your army? It is dead in the Crimea, quite dead. Even under Wellington it barely rose to 30,000 men. Had you still 30,000 men to hurl against France, is it with that you would invade her? What could you do, then? I am going to tell you. You could cruise along her coasts, stop on the way all merchant ships, seize all that part of her wealth which floats upon the water, strike her in her importations, strike her in her exportations, in short, annihilate her commerce, and thereby dry up the principal source of her revenues. But to do that you must have the right of search. Abandon that, you are dead men. To believe that England's strength dwells in her wooden ships is sheer stupidity. Without doubt they are necessary for her to attack the enemy in front; but who will give you an opportunity of attacking the enemy in front? Your cruisers! If you suffer France, armed against you, tranquilly to continue her commerce, whether under her own flag, or even under a neutral flag, what need will she have to come out to give you battle on your element? Why should she issue from behind her bulwarks, eager to incur without any necessity the risks of a naval engagement? Why should she be more chivalrous, or more absurd, than the Russians were during the last war, when we saw them condemn us, by a skilful caution, to the humiliation of a ridiculous promenade in the Baltic! Destroy, destroy, the enemy's commerce. This will inevitably force him to encounter you, and will soon deliver him up to your blows. If he has not his commerce to protect, what will matter to him the display of your maritime power? He will allow you to parade up and down at your ease upon the ocean, and your ships of the line will be nothing more than gigantic and very costly toys. Beware! The sea serves you at the same time that it menaces you; it offers to carry you, and it besieges

you. The situation of this island is such that, for it, there is no medium between being all-powerful and not being at all. It was thus she was always conquered, until the day she became, by subduing the sea, the mistress of the world ; conquered by the Britons, conquered by the Saxons, conquered by the Normans. To be in a condition to defend yourselves, you must be in a condition to attack. Attack ! You can do it only by means of the sea. The sea can only serve you by placing in your hands, or at your mercy, the commerce of whosoever should dare to brave you. Lose the right of search, you lose all. If the commerce of the world escapes from your control, what signifies your naval force ? Too expensive to be maintained if useless, it is no longer anything but a show. What advantage, in such a case, will you derive from the sea ? It will be the road that will lead the enemy to your very hearths ! If then you have the folly to abandon the right of search, put up your fleet to auction, and let your wives, cutting off the tresses of their hair, like the women of Carthage, make ropes of them for whatever useless hulks may remain to you ! England will be the victim of the sea on the day she shall have ceased to be its queen."

Such, if not the verbally reproduced, is at least the very faithfully abridged discourse delivered by Mr. Urquhart not two months ago. Now, that Mr. Urquhart is a singular being ; that he is looked upon by many persons as troubled with chimeras ; that he was created and brought into the world to say that Lord Palmerston is sold to Russia ; in short, that he has his own peculiar way of thinking upon every subject—all that I readily admit. But it is not less true that he is recognised as a man of rare penetration, who has gone deep into the *arcana* of diplomacy, who understands its hidden springs and mysteries, and who is particularly well qualified to appreciate what constitutes the relative strength of different countries. His words, therefore, are not without authority.

At all events, if his sentiments with regard to the right of search were not those of a great number of his fellow-citizens, England of the present day must be very unlike England of former times. With what fury, with what obstinacy, at the price of what dangers, of what combats, has she not always resisted the adoption of this restrictive principle of the con-

sequences of the right of search, that "Free ships make free goods!" As Mr. Walpole observed yesterday, Pitt and Fox, who differed upon so many points, did not differ as to the necessity of preserving absolutely intact the *rights* which England maintains to belong to the sovereignty of the seas. "Rather than permit a ~~neutral~~ flag to cover an enemy's cargo," exclaimed Pitt, on one occasion, before a full house, "I would envelop myself in the folds of the flag, and seek for glory in the grave."

Has this sentiment died out in England? No. The "declaration" of Paris has awakened much uneasiness; it has caused much keen regret; it has given an opportunity for many retrospective charges against Lord Clarendon. In the discussion which arose upon Mr. Horsfall's motion, Mr. Baillie Cochrane exclaimed, "How Lord Clarendon could have committed the tremendous blunder of acceding to this declaration of Paris, which has struck a blow at our maritime supremacy, is what I cannot possibly comprehend."*

The fact is, that in affixing his signature at the foot of the declaration, Lord Clarendon acted with all the more hardihood, as the question had not been previously submitted to Parliament, and consequently had not been discussed therein.

And when, at a later date, explanations on this head were demanded in the House of Lords, what was Lord Clarendon's answer? "Do you suppose that such a treaty would ever have been signed, if its tenor, or if even the basis on which it rests, had been submitted to Parliament? Your Lordships may take my word for it, it was not an easy thing to accomplish with a dozen negotiators. With a thousand negotiators, and the newspapers thrown into the bargain, it would have been impossible."

Lord Clarendon, then, was perfectly conscious that he was acting in a manner to arouse an energetic opposition in his own country. It is not we, assuredly, who have anything to complain of; and if it be true that England connects her interests with the exercise of a maritime tyranny insupportable by other nations, Lord Clarendon deserves to be doubly praised for having preferred the rights of justice and liberty to narrow considerations of national interest. But he must have looked for protests, and perhaps it is not unimportant that France should know how far these protests threaten her.

Yesterday, during the debate I have referred to, Mr. Walpole, in speaking of the consequences which might ensue from the declaration of Paris, said, in so many words: "If such are the logical consequences of the declaration, ought we not to examine if it suits us to adhere to them? But supposing that such is our duty, all that we can do is to protest."

Sir G. C. Lewis, to whom his official position ought to have recommended greater discretion, went further, and said, "I consider that the declaration of Paris is binding between this country and neutrals during war, and that it is as binding as a treaty though it is only a declaration; but if we were to engage in war with one of the contracting parties, *then the declaration of Paris, like every other treaty, would cease to have binding effects with regard to the belligerent.*"

A singular doctrine, is it not? What! a treaty concluded precisely with a view to war is to be annulled by the fact of war! What! England after having, for instance, declared in concert with France that privateering *in time of war* is prohibited, should nevertheless be justified, when hostilities happened to break out, in issuing letters of marque, and in letting loose upon our maritime commerce her vessels armed as privateers! As a general rule, war cancels treaties that previously existed between the belligerents; but not all treaties without exception, not those which *have for their special object the conduct to be held by the belligerents during war time!* It is a question of probity, as well as a question of common sense.

I must state, however, in common fairness, that the strange words which escaped from Sir G. C. Lewis have not found an echo, and that the Solicitor-General prudently attributed to them a different meaning to what they naturally seem to bear. They were uttered on the 12th of March, and it was on the 18th that the Solicitor-General, doubtless after mature reflection, passed them through the sieve of a more satisfactory interpretation. I leave you to judge if such a fact is of no consequence; for it must not be lost sight of—as Mr. Bright remarked, in qualifying the doctrine set forth as an *immoral* one—that Sir G. C. Lewis is an authority; that he is Secretary for War; that he is a member of the Cabinet; that he is counted among the thinkers; that he holds a distinguished

place among writers; and that words which fall from his lips are not lost in space.

• At an early date, with your permission, I will send you the continuation of this letter, which I am forced to break off because of its length, but which treats of a subject too serious, too interesting, too closely connected with the welfare of civilization and of France, not to be set forth in a complete manner.

LETTER LX.

THE NAVAL POWER OF THE ENGLISH DISCUSSED.

MR. BEASLY, a wealthy shipowner at Liverpool, being questioned as to the effects of the declaration of Paris, signed on the 16th of April, 1856, by England, France, Russia, Austria, Prussia, Sardinia, and Turkey, gave the following answer :

“ In the month of May, 1859, I had two ships in China. I had instructed the builder of one of them to build me a ship without its fellow, capable of beating everything that floated upon the water, and intended to bring to England the first cargo of tea. It was just the period when everybody was speaking of the annexation of Savoy and the affairs of Italy, and rumours of war were in the air. Two American ships presented themselves in competition with mine, and although they demanded a great deal more for freight, the English merchants gave them the preference, because, if war broke out between France and England, my ships would be exposed to capture, while the merchandise would be safe under the neutral American flag, according to the terms of the declaration of Paris.”

This fact and many others of the same kind were cited by Mr. Horsfall in the House of Commons, in support of this conclusion :—

“ That in signing the declaration of Paris, Lord Clarendon had created for England a situation that was not tenable ;

“ That, since all merchandise sailing under a neutral flag—with the exception of articles contraband of war—had been

exempted from all capture, it would have been better to have had the courage to go through to the end, and to have exempted from all capture merchandise sailing under the enemy's flag;

"That, otherwise, no merchant would be willing to load his merchandise, in time of war, in ships menaced with the danger of being taken; whence this inevitable consequence, that all the commerce of belligerents would pass into the hands of neutrals;

"That it was, therefore, absolutely necessary, if the declaration of Paris were to remain in force, to complete it by stipulating that 'henceforth at sea, in time of war as well as in time of peace, under an enemy's flag as well as under a neutral flag, all private property should be held inviolable.'"

Is it not a marvellous thing that such a proposition should see the light in England, and in an English deliberative assembly? That it should be moved by an Englishman and seconded by an Englishman, and that an English deliberative assembly should accord to it the honours of a solemn discussion? O logic of events, this is thy handiwork! What, then, has come to pass in the world since England, all England to a man, said by the mouthpiece of Pitt, and would have said by the mouthpiece of Fox himself: "Give up seizing the property of our enemies wherever our arm is long enough to reach it! Never! We will die first!" And now it is not only the enemy's property under a neutral flag that it is proposed to emancipate, it is the enemy's property under the enemy's own flag! For the first time in the history of the world, war is summoned to let peace pass!

Can it be that the England of our days is no longer the England of Pitt? As I stated in the preceding letter, the declaration of Paris is a thorn in the flesh of many Englishmen; and if it be true that the House of Commons consented to discuss the idea put forth by Mr. Horsfall, it is also true, first of all, that the debate turned almost exclusively upon the particular interests of England, understood in different ways; and secondly, that it simply resulted in the withdrawal of the proposed series of resolutions by their mover. Never mind! Such a debate, possible in our days, would not have been so in those of Pitt. I persist in thinking that it is one of the signs of the times.

I come now to the question discussed; a very serious question if ever there was one.

The first point to be cleared up is this: the declaration of Paris having exempted from the risks of war all merchandise under a neutral flag, with the exception of contraband of war, does it not thence follow that in the event of hostilities between two nations, the merchants belonging to both will be interested in loading their merchandise in neutral bottoms? And, if so, will there not be considerable loss inflicted upon the belligerents?

It cannot be denied that, in consequence of the declaration of Paris, belligerents will be condemned to lose, during the continuance of hostilities, at least a notable portion of the carrying business they previously possessed; unless it be supposed that merchants will be sufficiently careless of their interests to confide their riches to vessels liable to be captured, in preference to others which run no risk. Now, Mr. Lindsay has proved by keen reasoning, and with the authority of a consummate man of business, that so far as concerns England, for example, articles of first necessity cannot be conveyed to her in neutral bottoms without a rise in freight that will cause an increase of prices to be felt by the whole community.

But a consideration of a still more perilous character is that which refers to the fate of the English navy if the carrying trade passed entirely, or in a great measure, into the hands of neutrals. In France, where the *conscription maritime* exists, the navy does not depend absolutely upon the mercantile marine; but it is otherwise in England. It is on her mercantile service that the gigantic edifice of her naval power is based; it is the mercantile service that forms the seamen she needs for her victories of Aboukir and Trafalgar; it is the mercantile service that furnishes her with the means of manning her ships of war; and the bond of dependence which unites the two elements of her naval power has been rendered closer than ever by the abandonment of the press-gang system. If English merchandise find its way to neutral bottoms, English vessels will seek purchasers rather than rot in port; and in the same manner that the ships follow the merchandise will the sailors follow the ships, too happy to receive from neutrals, in the event of a protracted war, a rate of wages

which the royal navy would never be in a condition to pay them. The power of the English would thus be sapped at the very foundation; their trident would be broken. The sea would escape from them.

Another consideration which should make the English pause. If all private property at sea is not declared inviolable, is she quite certain that she has not more to lose than to gain? The total value of her importations and exportations which, in 1814, barely attained the sum of sixty millions, now amounts to three hundred millions. Of wheat, cotton, and sugar alone she annually imports to the value of seventy-five millions; that is to say, a sum considerably exceeding that which, in 1814, represented her importations and exportations taken together. Her flag sweeps the globe, borne by 37,000 ships,—her treasures float on every ocean wave. What richer prey was ever offered to the rapacious demon of strife? The naval power of England, it is true, can deal deadly blows; but her mercantile marine, by reason of its very magnitude, is liable to suffer terrible losses. No other nation presents a surface vulnerable at so many points. No other nation combines, in an equal degree, the danger of being stricken with the power to strike.

And let it not be said that to protect her mercantile marine, she possesses a navy that will ensure the safety of her commerce in all times and in all circumstances. Mr. Massey has justly observed that the age of convoys is passed. Steam has changed the conditions of the government of the seas. How could sailing ships escort steamers, or steamers escort sailing vessels? The immense trade which England carries on with China, India, California, the coasts of the Atlantic, South America, and Australia, could never await convoys nor depend upon them. Were it double what it is, the naval force of the English would be powerless to protect their commerce, so vast and so widely disseminated. At the time of their contest with America, in 1812, they had infinitely less to lose than at present, and yet what happened? I find it stated by Mr. Bright that in two years the American privateers captured 2,500 English vessels, which were sold for the enormous sum of twenty-one millions sterling!

All this perhaps was present to Lord Palmerston's mind when, on the 7th November, 1856, speaking to the Liverpool

merchants, he expressed a hope of seeing the day arrive when the declaration of Paris could be completed. On this occasion he uttered words which were not to be lost upon his opponents. "I cannot," he said, "help hoping that the principles which now regulate hostilities on land will be extended to hostilities at sea, and that private property will cease, in either case, to be exposed to attack."

Would you believe that this was the same man, the same Lord Palmerston, who, on the 3rd February, 1862, made the following declaration : "A naval Power like England cannot renounce any means of weakening its enemies at sea. If we do not seize their sailors on board their merchant ships, we shall have to fight them on board their ships of war. I deny that private property is spared during hostilities on land, more than it is during hostilities at sea. On the contrary, armies in an enemy's country take possession of all they want, of all that tempts them, without the slightest regard for the rights of property, as we should learn to our cost if England came to be invaded."

"*Les destins et les flots sont changeants*," says Béranger. It seems that in this respect a statesman very much resembles them. In 1856 Lord Palmerston prayed for the happy day when the enemy's merchandise should be safe under the enemy's own flag ; and in the debate to which I am directing your attention, he loudly affirmed that the adoption of such a principle would be a "suicidal policy." Oh ! Mr. Disraeli had, indeed, good reason to be surprised that Lord Palmerston should have changed his opinions on a subject that must have engaged his mind throughout his whole life ! Oh ! he had indeed reason to recall to mind that the man who, in 1856, in the presence of the merchants of Liverpool recommended the adoption of a policy in which, in 1862, he sees nothing but suicide, was for twenty years secretary of war and for fifteen years secretary for foreign affairs, and has had forty-five years to meditate on the true principles of the maritime code !

We must admit, however, that there are two sides to the question, and that strong arguments may be adduced on either side.

The Solicitor-General alighted upon a singularly happy expression when, in answer to the partisans of Mr. Horsfall's

ideas, he exclaimed: "What is it you want? A commercial peace beside a political war?"

Such, in point of fact, would be the anomalous situation created, by the practical admission of the principle: "The enemy's flag, like a neutral flag, covers the enemy's merchandise." Strange spectacle! On one side the soldiers and sailors of the two belligerent nations would be doing their best to cut each other's throats; on the other, the merchants of the two belligerent nations would continue to exchange their goods, as if nothing were the matter. English ships laden with cotton manufactures would be tranquilly sailing towards France, while French vessels laden with silk stuffs would be tranquilly sailing towards England, through French and English fleets engaged in the work of mutual annihilation. Commerce would flourish in the midst of national perils. Private property would pass unharmed over a surface covered with the ruins of public property. Every nation at war would be composed of two classes of men, of whom the one would be seeking only to enrich itself, while the other would hasten to expose itself to death; of whom the one would provide the enemy with all the commodities of life, while the other would be working out the enemy's destruction!

It may be asked with some uneasiness what would become, in such a case, of the bond that attaches the individual to the country. Instead of sharing the misfortunes of the common mother, many of her sons would be deriving benefit from them! The country might be humbled; she might be bleeding,—conquered,—in the death throes, while they, from that very cause, would have made their fortunes!

Nay more; would there not be a supreme danger in hollowing out an abyss between the military men and the rest of the citizens? What a perilous importance would there not be given to the former by a system which would make them the representatives of the nation, while the rest of their fellow-citizens represented only individual interests? The idea of human oneness would exist only under the flag. The country would be only there where the actual fighting happened to be. An admirable way of sanctifying war and absolving despotism!

It would, however, be something if this system promised a

longer continuance of peace. But the reverse would be the case. Why does the progress of commerce tend to remove farther and farther off the chances of war? Simply because the calamities of war bear heavily upon commerce; simply because those who live by peace are interested in having recourse as little as possible to those who live by death. The more nations, taken collectively, have to bemoan the fruits of their quarrels, the more difficult will it be for Governments to indulge in warlike fancies. Victor Hugo has said, pointing to a sword and a pen: *Ceci tuerat cela.* Should this grand prediction ever be realised, it will be because commerce is interested in it. Let that interest cease to act; let the merchant be in a condition to sleep in peace while the cannons thunder; let Governments, especially arbitrary Governments, be exempted from reckoning on the repugnance of nations to pay for war, it will be like throwing the bridle upon its neck. Make way for War!

But even if the system under notice were free from inconveniences, would it be practicable? Would it suffice to have certain stipulations scribbled upon a scrap of parchment, to insure to private property the advantages of peace in the midst of the horrors of a raging war?

It has been said that private property might well be inviolable during hostilities at sea, since it is so during hostilities on land.

But, in the first place, as it has been justly remarked, there is a great deal to be taken on land without touching private property. An enemy, be he ever so little the stronger, seizes upon all that constitutes national property; he seizes upon the public treasure; he seizes, as Sir G. C. Lewis fearlessly admitted, upon the great pillaging machine—the government of the conquered country. At sea, on the contrary, if you cannot take your enemy's ships and what they contain, you can take nothing.

In the second place, is it true that on land war does respect private property? What is the meaning, then, of the word *embargo*? What mean the words *forced contributions*? Since when have armies scrupled to live, in an enemy's country, at the charge of the inhabitants? Is the celebrated axiom, "War must feed War," nothing more than a figure of speech? No general ever kept his troops under a severer dis-

ipline than the Duke of Wellington. Nevertheless—Sir G. C. Lewis is my authority—the Duke of Wellington himself, in Spain, when he arrived at a village, caused the rafters of the houses to be pulled down, in order that his soldiers might have materials for lighting a fire and cooking their suppers.

The truth is, that war has its necessities, and that either the principle must be abandoned, or the consequences endured with resignation. That neutral vessels should be exempted from all capture, and their flag considered absolutely inviolable, is but just; and to render this doctrine practicable, the neutral Powers have only to make common cause in the preservation of what is their common interest. But to ask of a nation at war with another not to touch the property of its enemies, while its object is to kill them, and while it grasps them by the throat, is surely entering upon the region of chimeras. “Let us suppose,” said Lord Palmerston, “that we are at war with France—and I hope the case is far distant—France sends annually fifteen to twenty thousand sailors to the different fisheries which serve as nurseries for her navy. Imagine that we are engaged in blockading Brest, Toulon, Cherbourg, or Lorient; if the principle laid down by the honourable member for Liverpool (Mr. Horsfall) was adopted, we should be obliged to permit a fleet of twenty thousand sailors to pass through our squadron with impunity, on their way to furnish sufficient crews to the enemy’s ships collected in the port blockaded by us.”

One word more. If it be admitted that the enemy’s flag shall cover the enemy’s merchandise, there can be no more blockades, at least as regards trading ports; for it would be absurd to imprison what is recognised as inviolable, and the action of blockades attacks private property far more seriously than does the capture of a vessel in the open sea. Maritime war, then, is thus reduced to the ensanguined encounter of two fleets, without any other probable result than so many ships of war sent to the bottom, so many ships of war burnt, and much bloodshed. Where would be the price of victory? Would it be agreed beforehand that the conqueror shall be received as such in the capital of the vanquished foe? Why not, then, economise human blood, and return to the procedure of battle between the Horatii and the Curiatii?

I have now examined the two sides of the question discussed in the House of Commons, and you see that the result of this examination is, that in consequence of the stipulations which she regrets, but from which she cannot draw back, England is placed in the alternative, either of losing, in the event of war, together with her carrying trade, the essential supplies of her navy, or of consenting to the adoption of a system which would deprive her of all the material advantages of her naval superiority, and would convert maritime warfare into a bloody and brutal folly.

What, then, is the conclusion to be drawn from all this? You have already guessed it. It is that the mysterious chain of human events, by rendering the consequences of war more and more burdensome and absurd, is leading the foremost of belligerent nations to put to the world the question, the solemn question, of the suppression of war! Yes, though no one has said as much, or dared to say as much, during the discussion that has agitated the House of Commons, it is what irresistibly proceeds from every argument employed. Mr. Bright very clearly proved against the Solicitor-General that, if the idea enunciated by Mr. Horsfall were not adopted, a maritime war would be ruin and folly. The Solicitor-General proved, not less triumphantly, against Mr. Bright, that, if Mr. Horsfall's idea were accepted, a maritime war would become ridiculous child's play.

But, suppress war! How? Have patience! The time is not yet come for acknowledging the reasonableness of quarrels between nations being peacefully settled, like quarrels between individuals, by a high judicial decision. The moment is not come for acknowledging that the Abbé de St. Pierre and Mably were something better than fools. The idea of an Amphictyonic tribunal, intended to substitute the sovereignty of reason for the sovereignty of force, will not always be regarded as utopian. The world is still in a state of childhood. It will attain its majority, let us hope; and then, perchance, it will be found expedient to suffer no longer the happiness of nations to be weighed in that scale into which the Brennus of all countries, and the famous for insolence in all ages, have thrown the weight of their sword.

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